

THE SWAN-SONG:
Or the *Second Part* of the
LIFE of FAITH,
in times of
TRIAL & AFFLICTION:

Opened and applid by
That Late, Learned, eminently Gra-
cious, singularly Faithful & exemplarily
Zealous Minister of Jesus Christ,
MR JOHN BROWN:

And published by his afflicted Friend, &
a poor Wellwisher to the Interest of
Christ, & his suffering Remnant.

1 Cor. 16: 13. *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

Eph. 6: 13. *Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, &c.*

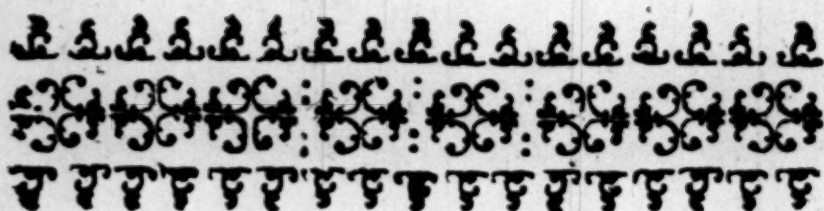
Ver. 16. *Above all taking the shield of faith &c.*

1 John 5: 4. ——— *And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

Philip. 4: 13. *I can all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

W
B

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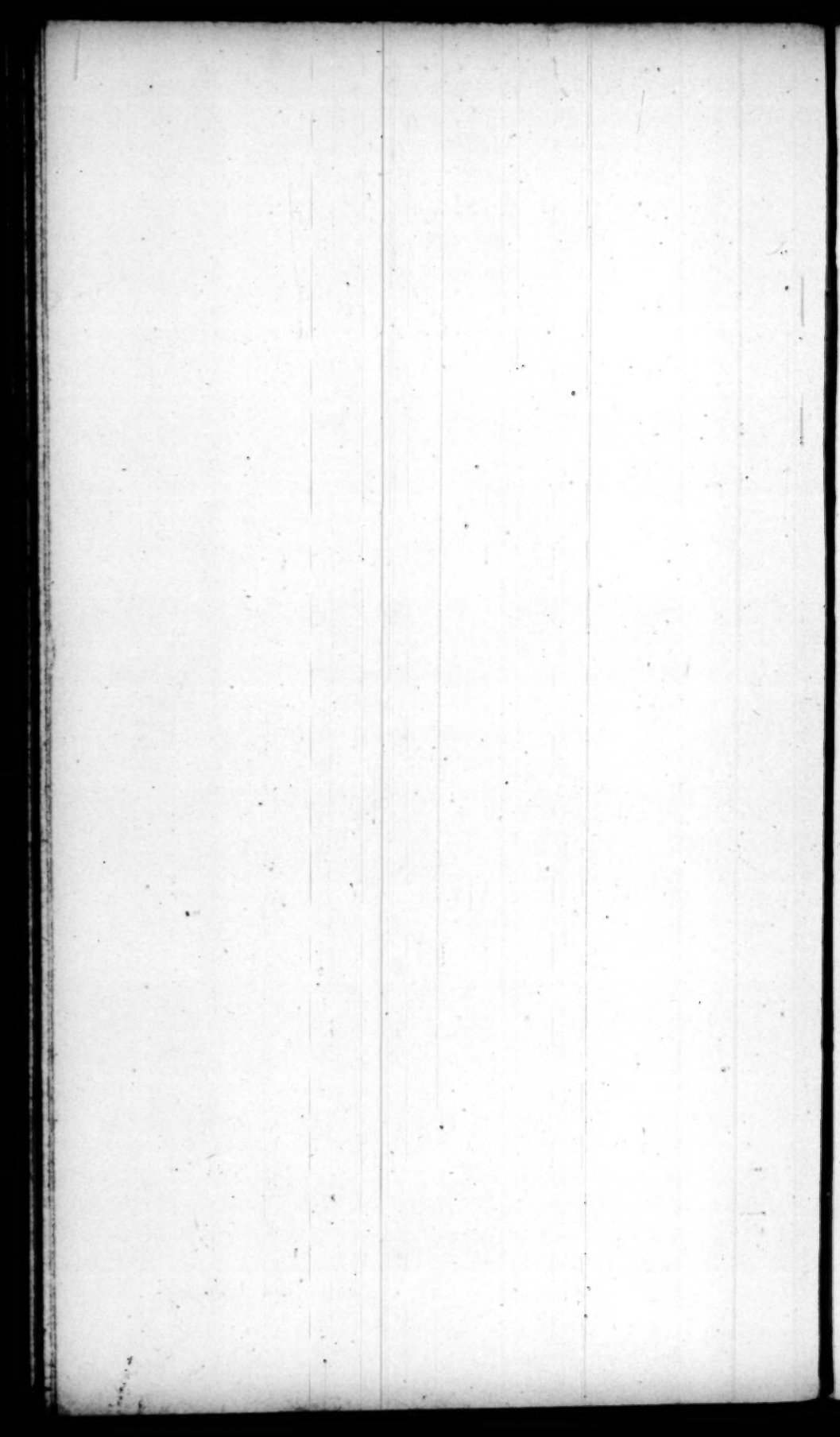
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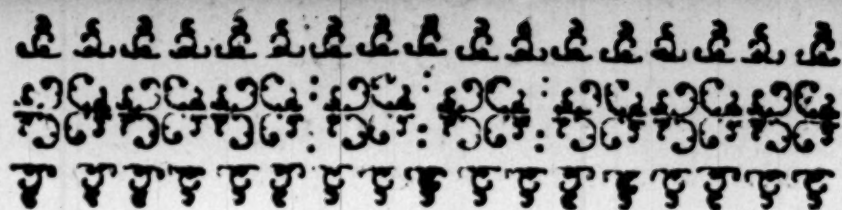
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To the
CHRISTIAN READER,
More particularly to the poor
suffering *Remnant* of the
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

DEAR BRETHREN,
and Companions in
tribulation & in the
Kingdom & patience
of JESUS CHRIST,

I make no other
Apologie, for this my present addresse,
than that it was amongst the last com-
mands, laid upon me, by the great, &
now glorified Author of this following
treatise, (revised by himself, & almost
wholly printed before his death) to
prefixe a few lines unto it, & so send it
out into the Church; that by it he being

An *Epistle*

dead might yet speake, particularly to his Brethren in tribulation, to whom living he was so comfortable, by holding forth light, sanctuary light, in their darkneses and difficulties, and now continues still to be; (after he hath no more a being amongst us) by pointing forth the way of life and strength, whereby the suffering saint (without succumbing or sinking, because of sorrow, misery and affliction) may be made able to do all things, and endure all things, while he walkes in that light. But, *Christian Reader*, while I obey the last command of my dear Brother, I shall so far consult thy advantage, as not to keep thee back, by my tedious and tastlesse scribe, from the perusal of a peece, which not onely, as to thee, needs not my *Epistle of Commendation*; For the *First Part* (long agoe in thy hands) is a sufficient *Epistle* to this *Second*, with all who are in love with

to the *Reader*.

with, & know the necessitie of the way of living by faith, which is the Christians life, in this life; (for, till the day of immediat vision, and full fruition come, we must walk by faith, not by sight: O blessed walke, which brings with it joy unspeakeable, and full of glory! And so it must, since it is a walking with God; For as faith's first work is the association of the soul with him, so its next and after vwork is the assimilation of the soul to him; whereupon followes that neer, that sweet and dear fruition of him, which hath unspeakable joy, as its inseparable Companion, or native effect) But, the due, and deserved praise of the Author, is so much in the Church of Christ, as it needs not the Epistle of any else, to command it; For,

First, If thou be not a stranger in our Israel, whoever thou be; then, if either eminency in grace or learning;
if

An Epistle

if vastnesse and pregnancy of parts; if fervor of zeal according to knowledge; if unwearyed diligence, in the work of the Lord, (wherein he laboured more abundantly than any of us all; for no man in the Church of Scotland hath filled up his measure, even as to that: nor know, nor see I a man who is like to doe it, nay who is in capacitie for it;) If a holy heroick misregard of men, and their estimation, in approving himself to God, by a ready and resolute withstanding the corruptions of his time, and opposing all these courses and contrivances, and these unworthy connivings, whereby the cause hath been prejudged; yea basely abandoned, and the free course and progresse of the Gospel obstructed; If single sollicitousnesse, and strenuous endeavours, how to have pure ordinances preserved in this generation, and propagat to the posteritie: in a word, if faithfulnessse,

as

to the *Reader*.

as a servant , in all the house , and matters of his God , even that God, who counted him faithful , and put him in the Ministry ; and loyaltie to his princely Lord and Master, (the prerogatives of whose Crown, the Privileges of whose Kingdom , and the establishment of whose Throne, were more prized by him , more precious and dear unto him , than all other interests whatsoever : nay , he was so far from regarding any other interest, in respect of that alone valuable one ; that , as he was never daunted , from a plain peremptorinesse in owning thereof, by the dread of poor mortals , or the fear of what the stated enemy could doe unto him ; so , he was never demurred , into a forbearance , or brow-beaten into a base and un - Ambassadour - becoming silence , by the displeasure and disconntenancings , even of such of his Brethren, whom otherwise he loved , and high-

An Epistle

ly honoured, as to a plain contending with them, wherein he perceived them not to walk uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, and to the former principles of that Church, while she retained first love, and did first works: Yea, he judged it duetie (and in this he had the mind of Christ) to contend earnestly with them, for their not earnest contendings for the Faith; though, for this, he should have been contemned, and accounted (as he was) a man of contention:) I say, if thou be such an one, to whom such a blessed Conjunction of rare Gifts, with such a rich and plentiful measure of Grace, can endear any man; I then nothing doubt, but MR BROWN, Great and Gracious MR BROWN, hath such a place in thy soul, and such a preference to others, as thou wilt judge it superfluous in me, to say any thing to commend what the truly great Elijah of
his

to the *Reader*.

his time (I mean of this present time, when, having served his generation, according to the will of God, he fell asleep,) the man jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, above all his Brethren, whom he hath left behind him, (I except not one Soul, nor am I ashamed, or affraid to give it under my hand) doth here present thee with, as his farewell to the Saints, and the excellent Ones, in whom he so much delighted, and for whose advantage he so much laid out himself, night and day, and for the work and cause of Christ his Lord; In so much as this his kindnesse to the Saints, and care of all the Churches, particularly that poor Church of *Scotland*, kept him alwayes neer unto death, through his not regarding his own life, to supply the lack of other mens service to Christ and to his Church: But, if thou be not such an one; then, as thou declares thy self unworthy of what is here

An *Epistle*

presented, so thou canst not quarrel, if I be so far of the same opinion with thee, though I dare not but wish thee to be quickly of another mind. I know very well, this which is here hinted, of the excellent and savourie Author, will be unfavourie to some; yea, will incense not a few, who would be accounted Masters in Israel who have been busie (while he was busied about the work of the Lord) in backbiting defaming & reproaching him, & that, because he withstood them all to the face, wherein they were, & are justly to be blamed: But, I must lay my reckoning, and have done it, with that, and many such things: Onely, by way of Apologie, I must tell such, that it is not my work, to engage with them, at present, on this head; they may expect to hear of that afterward; yet next, till more come, I doe not crave their libertie or pardon to say, that it shall be amongst the posteritie (as it is
alrea-

to the *Reader.*

already with the more serious in this generation) a stain, which shall never be vviped off the memorie of the reproachers, vvhen his memorie shall be blessed, and his cognizance, in the succeeding generations of the Church, shall be, that, in the day vvhen he fell a sleep, the Church of *Scotland* was deprived of the most incomparably able, and the most absolutely burning and shining light, belonging to that Church.

Secondly, it may be an appreciating, and endearing consideration, unto thee, that this Treatise is not only the work of such a worthy vvorkman, such a Walker with God, such a Wrestler with him, such a Witnesse for his Master, and such a beloved Disciple: But it is his last Work; this he wrote at the close of a long walk with God: For, in his walk with him, and after him, having by experience found, there neither would,

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nor could be courage, nor constancy
nor comfort in that course, except
faith were acting vigourously, upon it
blessed object, that Fountain of all ful-
nesse, both for furniture & frame, both
for the light of direction & consolation,
and for a measure of life, in order to ac-
tion, according to the emergent diffi-
culties, & dangers, that are the insepa-
rable attendants, of the duties of the
present day: He was taught, by the
things which he suffered frō all hands,
to make a blessed, & beneficial vertue
of this necessitie, & so he held on in his
way, (being thus upheld and suppor-
ted, without turning aside to the right
hand, or the left, and without being
diverted or deterred from following
the Lord fully. The things that he
suffered of late, especially at the
hands of Brethren, (their shame, but
his garland and glory) put him to stu-
die and learn the obedience of faith,
wherein he was helped, and taught to
make

to the *Reader*.

make such progresse, and proficiency, as he enjoyed a sweet serenitie & calme, in the midst of all these boisterous blasts, which, out of all airths, blew in his face; but most bitterly out of that airth, whence the storme could, or should least of all have been expected; so that, he did not onely possesse his soul in patience, as moved by none of these things, which befell him, from foes or friends; but he was quieted, quickened, and comforted in his conflictings; yea, he got meat out of the eater, out of weaknesse he was made strong, & enabled to doe exploits as knowing his God: And finding the sweetnesse of this life, (otherwise of many sorrowes) and experiencing, how much he was enabled for all things, through Christ strengthening him, he was moved and constrained, from the abundant furniture, the sweet facilitie, yea the begun felicitie he found in this life and course, to

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point forth this way of pleasantnesse, and this path of peace, to such as are put to walke in the midst of trouble; that so they may finde, by following this course, the same Light arising to them in Darknesse; and the same life, strength, courage and comfort, springing up and communicat unto them, whereby they may be enabled to goe foreward, through all difficulties, all dangers, yea and all deaths. Hereby thou who, in the sight of difficulties, and the sense of thy impotency, art made to say, *What is my strength that I should hope?* Art taught to answer by another question, *Since he is strong, why should I despond or doubt?* For, all things are possible to him that believes, all difficulties are superable to faith; for, faith is the engaging of an Omnipotent God, for an impotent Creature, whereby the believer is more than a conquerour: And because that stronger is he who is in the believer,

to the *Reader*,

believer, than he that is in the World, therefore, being, by him that dwells in him, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and long suffering, with joyfulness, conquer he must; and this is the victorie, whereby he overcomes the World, even his faith; for faith's valour is, when overpowered, to cast it self and its burden upon God, who performeth all things for the believer; and so (how weake so ever in the conflict; yet) by faith he carries away the conquerours Crowne in the issue, and is set down at last to sing, *Thanks be to God who hath given me the victory.* I say then, these are the last words, of a great Student in this blessed and mysterious art, and of a noble proficient in this happie studie (for he speaks vvhat he knowes, he speaks vvhat he hath found and tasted) instructing thee, how thou mayest with him hold on in thy vvay, and vvax stronge.

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stronger and stronger; yea, howv thou mayst surmount all difficulties, othervvise insuperable, as carried upon eagles vvings; and run, vvith the greatest burden upon thy back, and not be vveary; and vvalk, vvith the greatest load upon thy loins, and not be faint. Naturalists, you knowv, and Mariners tell us of the flieing fish, vvhich, vvhen pursued in the vvater by the *Shark*, flies up into the air, as a fowl, and so escapes the danger: But it can flee no longer in the air, than its fins continue vvet, and vvhen these become dry it falls down again into the sea: A lively embleme of a lively Christian vvho, vvhen in hazard to be swallowed up of trouble, and devoured by the teeth of sharks, mounts up above them upon eagles vvings, and so escaps them. But that vvhich vvaters these vvings, vvhereby faith flies, and that vvhich gives it this vigour is fresh influence of the Spirit:

to the *Reader.*

Spirit: The supplie of the Spirit of Christ quicken's and strengthen's faith, and then failing and feeble faith renews its strength, as the eagle renews her age: Its this which gives weake and withered faith a fresh, vigourous and youthful greenneffe, and puts the beleever in case both to say, *in God have I put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can doe unto me; and also, I am able for all things, through Christ who strenghtens me, or puts power in me*. Now the Authors scope and aim is to tell thee, and teach thee how thou mayest be expert in this noble flight above trouble: (O happy dexteritie in a time of trouble upon earth, to know how to make use of faith's wings, in flieing heaven height, and to be instructed in the exercise of that blessed art, how to make use of thy faith, whereby thou pleases God in thy ordinarie walk, for performing these high heroick acts, in the day of the most
dismal

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dismal and deep distresse, whereby it is evident, that the sweetest serenity of soul, in the saddest & most surprising of troubles, is possible to him that believeth!)

Thirdly, That which doth commend Books, and without an Epistle of recommendation, is an Epistle Commendatory sufficient, & makes all courting of the Reader to their perusal, a superfluous complement, an unprofitable waste of words, yea, & a profuse expense of precious time, is, That what the Author writs be not onely upright, and words of truth; But, that the truth treated of be pertinent to the present day; & the duty pressed be that which must be known, that it may be practised, when upon the real and right performance thereof depends, in a particular manner more than the believers peace; yea, more than his soul, and eternal happiness can amount unto; Viz. the glorifying of God in the fires of fiery trials,

to the *Reader*.

trials, and the bringing up a good report upon his vvayes, by a practical proof, that there is a sufficiency of strength communicable, whereby the weakest is made strong; and a singularity of sweetnesse experienced, whereby a man, otherwise of sorrows can sing in the wayes of the Lord, even when his way lyes thorow fire & water; so that he who hath taken hold of the path of life needs neither faint in the way, because of his own weaknesse, there being everlasting armes underneath, stronglie supporting; nor yet turn aside out of it, when there is a lyon in it; neither wearie in going foreward, through want of what is sweet and refreshing, since there is a well spring of comfort insured unto the walker in these wayes, so as in the greatest pinch and penurie, of all outward things yea, when put to the greatest pain, he hath still everlasting consolation, and can glory in tribulation,

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tion, and rejoyce, not onely in the hope of the glory of God; but sing as alreadie in the suburbs of heaven, while under the shineings of his Masters face, and the shedings abroad of his love in the heart. And according to this rate and reckoning I may make bold to say; the mater herein treated of is of that moment, import & present necessitie, as to draw the eyes of all men towards it, that their hearts may be cast into this mould, and they put in case to practise accordingly; for, this was the happie Authors scope; for this he wearied himself, and was at this peece of pains, (amongst his other eminent, singularly useful and assiduous labourings, for the edification of the Church, at home and abroad, the care of all which lay upon him) that thou mightest know how to finde ease, safetie and refreshment, when there seems nothing in thy life, but sorrow; and in thy cup, but gall and worme-wood.

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wood. In a word, the Author hath written the first & second part of the *Life of Faith*, that the Reader may write the third part in his practise, by making his life a transumpt of both, in a day when most are making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; and many who once professed themselves Disciples, are now turning back: And, Alas, I am affraid, it shall be observed, and said of them, they walked no more with him; But, for their turnings aside unto these croaked courses, were led forth with the workers of iniquitie: So that this is a word in season seeing besides the native and intrinsick beautie of truth, that commends what is said to thy peruseal the adventitious beautie of seasonableness endears it to thee; For he that writes it was a Preacher who sought to finde out acceptable words, & the tongue of the learned was given unto him; For, what he writs doth witness,

to the *Reader*,

nesse, that his care vvas vvakened to hear as the learned, that so the might speak and vvrite as the learned.

But, for a conclusion, I must tell thee, that the spiritually vvise, and zealous Author vvas not only driven to treat of this subject, because of the present pressurs of the poor remnant, pressed out of measure, and beyond strength, (though he had this also in prospect) that so they might be quickened, quieted, encouraged and comforted, under these crushing calamities; and might be instructed, hovv to glorifie God, in this day of visitation; and endure the vvorlds hatred and the vvorst that either enraged Adversaries, or incensed friends can doe, as seeing him vvho is invisible, and as believing, that all these shall vvork together for their good, and as assured that they shall turn to their salvation, through the intercession of the Mediator, and the supplie
of

to the *Reader.*

of the Spirit of Jesus Christ : But, more particularly considering our vway, and our proceeding from evil to vvorse; vvhat high affronts have been put upon our infinitely glorious Lord and Master; & hovv these have not only not been resented and vvitnessed against, vvith a zeal, a fervor of pure zeal proportioned to the furious fervidnesse, and unhallowed heat, of that opposition to Christ, and hatred to the coming of his Kingdom in the World, vvitnessed by the complex of the adversaries course and carriage: But, Alas, to our shameful & astonishing faint (vvhen called to have been valiant for the truth, and to have acquit ourselves as the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, ambitious to have been sacrificed upon the Interest of our Royal Master's glorious Crowvn, and Prerogative) hath been added, a drawing back; Courses have been taken, patronized and, applauded, partly in
recto,

An Epistle

recto, partly in *obliquo*; And that, by some vvhom least of all it became, &, if I may say so, from vvwhose hand Christ might have expected a heroick opposition to these hell-black driveings, vvwhereby a defection (for in despite of all the palliatings, and cunning plaisterings to hide this, novv its manifest) hath been, and is novv carried on: And there is no small rage vvitnessed, against all vvwho essay to discover our iniquitie, to turn avvay our captivitie: In a vvord, vvhen he considered all the dispensations of God, and took notice of the dispositions & propensions of men, not of the multitude, but of Ministers, and Professors, even of these vvwho vvould monopolize to themselves the repute of zealous according to knowvledge, & the onelie vvise men in the Church, vvwho knowv the times, and vvwhat the Israel of God ought to doe, as if vvifdom vvwere either to die vvwith them,
or

to the Reader.

or to live only with the persons of their principles and practices, he fell under the apprehension and persuasion (and who can escape it) of a woful day, coming upon the people of these practices; however a great many have not only been putting far away the thoughts of this evil day, but have been dreaming of a delivery: (ah how deep a delusion shall this be quickly found!) And therefore that the poor remnant, who in some measure have escaped, and have endeavoured to keep themselves pure from the pollution of this defection, may know what to do, and how to carry, in that day of vengeance of our God, when he shall draw his wheted, his glittering and furbished sword, to avenge the quarrel of a broken and a burnt Covenant; and that sword shall devour flesh, till the Land, dofiled under the inhabitants thereof, by transgressing the Law, changing
* * the

An Epistle

the Ordinances, and breaking the everlasting Covenant, be soaked with the blood of the men guiltie of these abominations: (and then, Alas, who shall live when the Lord doth this?) I say, it was the foresight of this wooll day which made this Seer draw these draughts, and lay before thee these Directions, that thou may not be put out of frame and posture; But mayest be strengthened, perfected and thoroughly furnished unto every good work, when all things run in a confusion, and tend to ruin; and that thou mayest know of a blessed, a secure and safe place of retreat, in that dismall day, when it shall be said to the men with the slaughter weapon in their hand, *begin at my sanctuary*, begin at the houses of Ministers and Professors, (I know, it will be mistaken, if I say it; But yet, I cannot forbear it: Alas? of all the men in the Nation, we may particularly medi-
tat

to the *Reader*.

that terrour; and I feare, it shall be
seen and observed, escape who will,
many of us shall be taken; escape who
will, Ministers, their wives & chil-
dren, and many professors, together
with their wives & Children, shall not
escape;) & mayest be as Mount Sion,
that cannot be moved; yea, and
without fear, by living the life of
faith, though the earth should be re-
moved, and the mountains carried
into the midst of the sea; though the
waters thereof roar, and be troubled,
and though the mountains shake vwith
the swelling thereof: There is a re-
fuge, and quiet resting place; there is
strength, and a present help in the
time of such trouble; for God is then
a rock of salvation, and a refuge to
his people, even in such tempests and
troubles, vwhen the Confusion and
calamitie is so great and universal,
as the sea seems to swallow the moun-
tains, and the mountains seem to

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smother the sea: And the Authors designe, in what thou art here presented with is to teach thee, how to make this rock of ages all things to thy self, by believing, and acting faith upon him, which he hath made himself to thee in the promise; that so thou mayest be safe and sing, because, to thy securitie by him, there is unspeakable satisfaction to be had in him; when the sinners in Zion shall be afraid, and fearfulness shall both surprise the hypocrits, and many who have the root of the matter in them, because of what they have been; and because of what they have unworthily done, and left undone: he who follows this Course, shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks. his bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure.

Believe it, my Brethren, all you have found is but the least part of
vvhhat

to the *Reader*.

vvhhat you have to fear, yea of what is inevitable : The fury of the Lord is ready to be poured forth as fire upon this generation ; the day and hour approaches, wherein no man shall have any thing left him to allay his sorrow, or comfort him in his anguish : But he vvho, being in Chist Jesus, is in case to oppose the Comforts of the Holy Ghost, and that everlasting Consolation which is in Christ, to present confounding and overwhelming calamities ; the oppressions, the horrid and bloody barbarities of enraged, cruel and blasphemous enemies, incensed into a madnesse against the followers of the Lamb, and thirsting insatiably after the blood of the saints, vvho dare not receive the mark of the beast ; the tumult of incensed friends, the clashing, the contending, the insurrections of brethren against brethren, will make our poor Land such a weary Land, as men shall be weary

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of their lives , and wish to be gone from the evil day ; yea , shall either seek for death , and not find it , or in agony and horreur , shall be found of death , and cannot flee from it . But ô how in that day and hour will the sweet shadow , and the secure shelter , of the rock of Ages revive , and refresh such as have accessse with boldnesse and confidence , to lay themselves down under it ! they shall finde it that place indeed where the weary are at rest , they shall finde that this is the rest-alone , where-with they may cause their weary souls to rest : and that this is the refreshing too : such as believe in Christ Jesus , and dwell in him by faith , and delight in him by love , shall either not finde the evil of these dreadful dayes , which are coming ; or what they finde of it shall not much trouble them , because of what upmaking they finde in the fruition of him , who gives meat out
of

to the *Reader*,

of the eater & sweet out of the strong ;
and who shall walk with them in the
midst of the fiery furnace, when we
may expect , it shall be made seven-
times hotter than ever we saw it. (For
the Devil is come down , having great
wrath, and the cry of our crimson ini-
quities is gone up to Heaven.) O hap-
py is the man , who by all his dis-
tresses , is driven to seek , and make
sure a dwelling , in the secret place of
the most high , and to take up his a-
bode under the shaddow of the Al-
mighty ; for , such may sit down and
sing , because safe , and say of the
Lord , *He is my refuge , in him will I*
trust , as it is *Psal. 91 : vers. 1, 2.* O
safe ! ô sweet refuge ! he can finde no
evil who is got in there , and no evil
can finde him : For he covers the man ,
with his feathers . who trusts under
his wings , and his truth is his shield
and buckler : Would the man , that is
escaped in thither , change his dwel-
ling

An Epistle

ling place, and abode, for a Kings palace, while in this Pardise feasted upon the peace of God; would he change his shelter for a strong tower: O! by no means! the Universe cannot afford him such securitie and protection; neither can it supply him, to a running over, with such plentie of sure and unspeakable pleasure: O how excellent doe these finde his loving-kindenesse, who put their trust under the shadow of his wings! As they shall finde there a refuge, until the calamitie be overpast, so they shall be abundantlie satisfied, with the farnesse which they shall finde, in this house, and he shall make them drink of the rivers of his pleasure; he shall feast them, while others famish, upon the begun fruitious of himself, and while others are made to weep, and wring their hands, over their broken and emptie cisterns, they shall finde, that with him is the fountain of life,

to the Reader.

so that they may drink, and drink abundantly, and thus forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more: Nay, this is such a happy hiding place, as it's a compleat dwelling place; any hole or hold that is a shelter and protection, in the day of a windy storme & tempest, is thought good; wars will commend the bottom of a dark dungeon, where a man is as buried alive; yea a coal fire (whereof some dear to God have in our dayes, while the wicked were hunting for the precious life, been forced to make use as a shelter) beyond & above a palace of pleasure; but o what a sure, what a safe refuge is the rock of Salvation in time of trouble! O how doe the environing walls of Christs righteousness, & power, these everlasting armes underneath, supporting, and round about surrouding & preserving, from the tempest of wrath, that it cannot invade or break thorow make such ac-

An Epistle

commodation sweet & pleasant ! But, when with all? this secret place of the most high hath not onely all safetie in it, but it hath also all sweetnesse, all satisfaction and all goodnesse laid up in it, for such as it hids : Its not onely a strong place, that hath salvation for walls and bulwarks ; But it is within this also, that he shines and shewes his marvelous kindnesse, *Psal. 31: vers. 20, 21.* there is not onely a refuge here, but there is besids a rich treasure of all goodnesse laid up in this storehouse, to be laid out, and made forthcoming for all who enter within the gates of this Citie : Its not onely a house of war, but a house of peace and pleasure ; its within these walls that that peace of God, which passeth understanding, doth guard the heart and mind ; as its here, that the place of their defence is the munition of rocks, so it is within this rock, that their bread is given them, and
their

to the *Rèader*.

their waters ate m.de sure; -there is great farnesse within this strong hold for feasting souls, and a river of pleasure for their refreshing : This is that unexhausted well-spring & fountain of loving kindnesse, tender mercies and bountie, which glads perpetually the hearts of all beleivers: This is the river that maketh glade the whole Citie of God: This is the very Fountain of life it self, thirsting to be drunk of by thristy souls; which is nothing elle, but God himself imparting, and communicating himself, to his emptie and indigent people, and making up thereby all their wants, according to his riches in glory; a saving God, satiating the weary soul, and replenishing it with goodnesse; this River of God which is full of water running in into the heart of him who hath opened his mouth wide, till it be filled, to a running over. O how do they, who finde by tasting how good he is, and

An Epistle

what is to be had in the Kings chambers, pitie the poor mistaken World, that feed upon husks, while they are feasted with these royal dainties. Alas ! the World, who are strangers to their joy, knowes little what a Kings life they live; and how while in their wildernesse lot, they feed upon Manna, and are feasted with Angels food; they little believe, how the People of the Lord, in their shuttings up, are so satiat with goodnesse, as their hearts are enlarged, while made glade by the light of his countenance lifted up upon them, in their desirings for others, that it were with them in all things, as it is with themselves, save as to their bonds: O what a blessed hiding place doe they finde him! He is such a secure hiding place, as is also a most sweet, beautiful and refreshing resting place; a refuge, where repose and soul ravishment are met and married together, without a divorce.

Now

to the *Reader.*

Now, could a soul think of changing his dwelling place, could he ever by choice and upon deliberation come out, after he hath enterd into these chambers, and shut the doors about him, and hath tasted and seen how good God is? No sure, it will not, it cannot think on this without terror; it will not, after it hath drunk of the river of his pleasure, and is satisfied with the fatnesse of his house, leave these pure springs, to drink of an impure puddle. Ohow easily must the soul be arrested. where it is ravished in the fruition of what it finds.

Now, my dear and distressed Brethren Consider, that you may not be weary nor fainted in your minds, in the day when the blast of the terrible one is as a storme against the wall, what a compleat hiding place you have from trouble, and what a citie of refuge you have to flee unto, *Thou art my hiding place,*

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place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance, said the Psalmist Psal. 32. And in this he is not alone, for grace hath made you sharers with him of this great goodnesse: The sure mercies of *David* are made sure to all who have taken hold of the Covenant, so as whosoever have fled into Jesus Christ for a refuge from wrath and for pardon of sin, when pursued by justice, they may conclude this as a sweet consequent of it also, *Thou art my hiding place from trouble*; And whatever hardship you may meet with, or whatever heaviness you may be under, yet you may conclude (O comfortable conclusion) *That the Lord will command his loving kindnesse in the day time for you, and in the night his song shall be with you*; yea, you shall be compassed about with songs of deliverance, songs shall environ you about, and joy shall break in on every side;
you

to the *Reader*.

you shall be able to look no where (even while all who look on may think your misery unmixed, and your sorrow without the least alay of sweet) but you shall finde matter of a song, and be able to command a most sweet consort of musick within your own soul, because both safe and satisfied. The Lord will be a refuge, in times of trouble, *Psal. 9.* and they who know his name, which is a strong tower, may and will put their trust in him. This then is the all of your businesse in order to support, sattie and satisfaction; in order to your being in case, both to honour him, and to be happie, in the midst of all possible sufferings for his sake; to betake yourselves to him for shelter, and trust in the covert of his wings: And it is for this end, that this teacher, taught of God, hath left his Brethren in affliction these directions, that as they may be persuaded to stand perfect and compleat

An Epistle

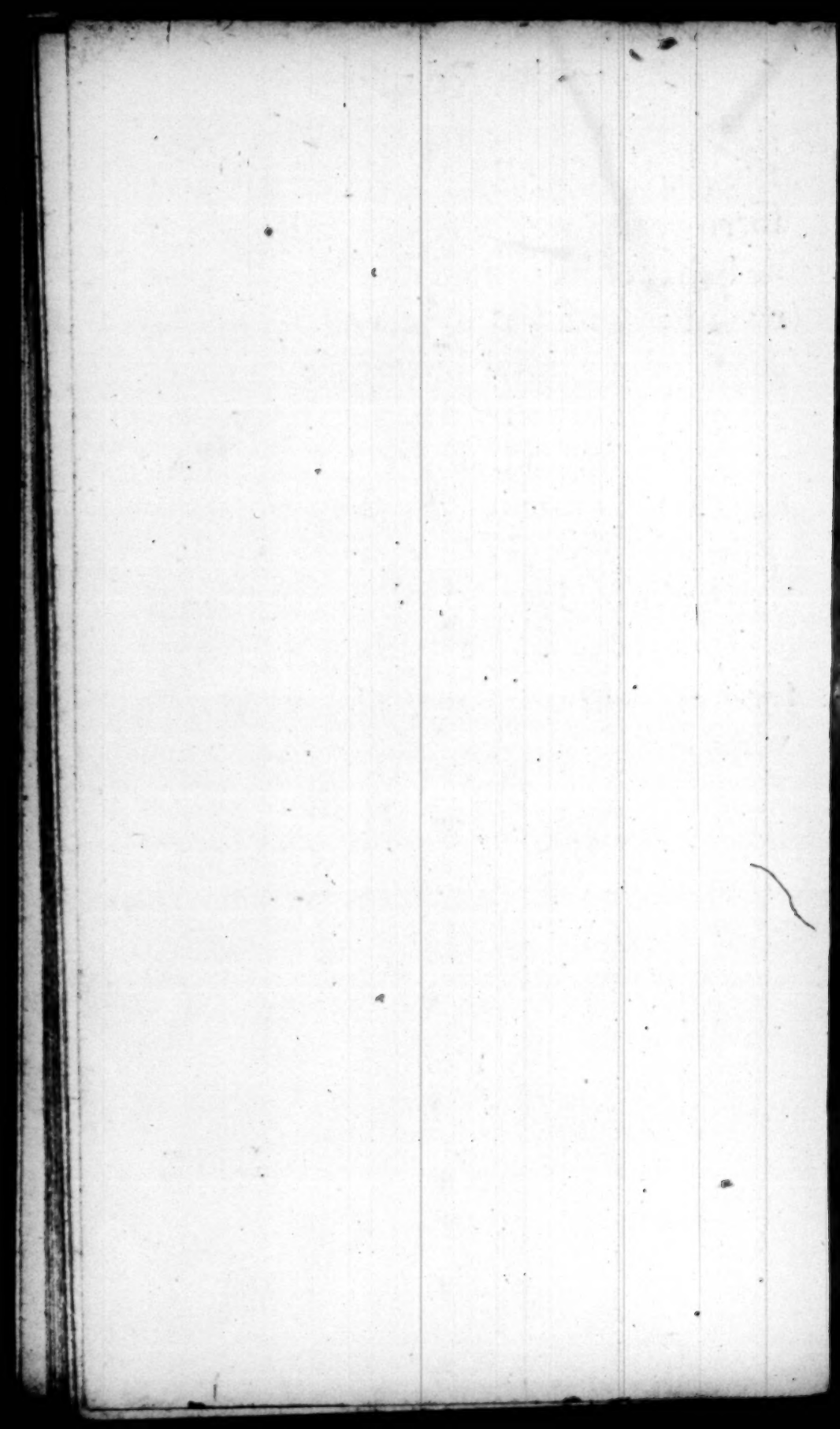
pleat in all the will of God; so amidst all their sufferings for his sake, they may know how to have a sweet serenity of soul, by acting faith upon him as a full Fountain, suitably to all their needings, wantings, darknesse, difficulties and dangers; and so be put in case to say, *In the Lord have we righteousness and strength; in him by whom we are justified, in him and by him do we glory in tribulation, and are more than conquerours.* Now, that you may live more constantly with him & have a more comfortable and joyfull life then ever, in a fellowship with the Father & with his Son J. Christ; that you may have grace for grace, yea an all of grace, whereby you may glorifie your Father which is in Heaven; adorne the doctrine of God the Saviour; be enabled to fight the good fight of Faith through Christ strengthening you, and endure to the end, by the new supplies of the Spirit of Christ, as
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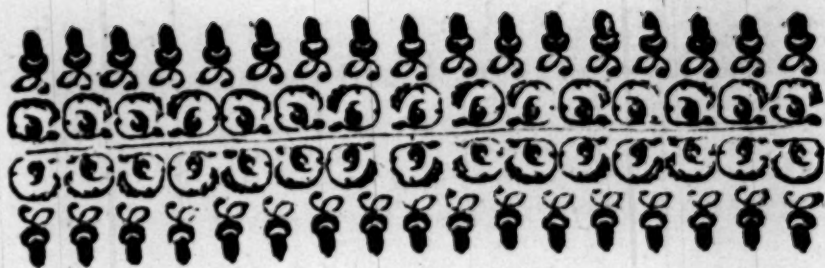
to the *Reader.*

it is the aim of the Writer of this treatise, who after all his sufferings and sorrowes, (in which and under which he behaved as a good souldier of Jesus Christ; and was observed, to have acquired a special dexteritie, in making use of the shield of Faith) is now got above them, and eternally comforted over them, in the sight and fruition of that God, in whose service he lived, as devoted to his fear, and died in that noble posture; So it is for you the earnest desire of his soul, who is

Your poor Welwisher and Companion in tribulation.

THE





T H E
L I F E of F A I T H
in times of
P E R S E C U T I O N.
P A R T. II.

THE INTRODUCTION.



Word spoken *fitly* (saith the Wise man Prov. 25. ver. 11.) or *in its season*, or as it is in the Original, *upon his wheels*, is like apples of gold, in pictures of silver; that is, is both pleasant and profitable. We began, in the foregoing Treatise of this Subject to *ex-plain* the nature of this Life, which is to be had by faith, in a very sad and trying time; how and what way faith interesteth a Soul in this Life; and how they should *act* faith,

faith, who would partake hereof, in a day of Difficulty and Temptation, wherein, because of adhering to Christ, and his Truth, the life of his people is made bitter unto them, and they are exposed to many Troubles and sharpe Exercises: And, for a further Encouragment unto a faithful and stedfast adhering to the Truth, in a day of stormy Tempests, and fierie Trials, we mentioned some of those many Considerations, which the Lord had left on record, in his word, that we through patience and comfort of these Scriptures might have hope; and so might be perfect, and of good comfort: such as

1. Gods promised *Presence* with them, in all their Trials, how sharpe and fierie so ever, the faith of which would make the weak and fainting soul become couragious and valiant, as *David*.

2. *Christ's Sympathie* with them, in all their Distresses, Troubles, Necessities, Dangers, Paines, Losses, Crosses, and Sufferings for Him, and His Cause; which, if firmly beleaved, according to the sure and undoubted grounds thereof, could not but make them sing all their Sorrow out of countenance.

3. The *Lord's Stile* of being a Redeemer; which if fled unto by faith, in an evil day, would

would prove a strong Tour, to which they might run and be safe.

4. The *promises*, which are Many, Great, Glorious, Sutable, Pertinent, Precious, Sure and Covenanted; and as these are made and registred of purpose, that His People might have strong Consolation; so the Christian faith & Improvement of them, in a day, when Dispensations would seem to cross them, is both the special duty of His people, in that day; and also the only mean to keep them in life, and hold their head above water, when called to swim against both tide and stream; and the fixed faith of these would both stablish & strengthen the tossed and wearie soul.

5. *Former Experiences of God's Care, Faithfulness, Tenderness, Readiness to deliver and supply wants, to carry thorow Troubles, and at length, in due time, to deliver out of them.* These, when rightly improven, according to Gods warrand, and Gospel grounds, will furnish a feast, whereupon faith may feed, and the soul become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and with Courage, Hop and Confidence wade thorow a Sea of Affliction.

6. *The quarrel and controversie is the Lords.* A noble ground of courage, comfort and confidence, when beleaved and rightly Improved.

7. *Their Sufferings are the Sufferings of Christ*, when they are for His sake, and upon His account. And this cannot but be a wel full of Consolation, unto the poor afflicted and persecuted Childe of God, when it is beleevd, and fed upon by faith.

These I have (as the Lord was pleased to assist) spoken a little unto, in the foregoing Piece, onely in order to this End, That the faithful and honest hearted Believer, who either hath already met with, or layeth his account to meet with, Sufferings of one kind, or of another, in following his Lord and Master, in the way of Truth and Righteousness, according to the Commands of God, and Institutions of Christ, may in part be helped to know his own strength, where the stock thereof is, and how he may improve the same to his own rich advantage, in every Case and Condition, that the Lord, in his wise and holy Providence, bringeth him into; and that so, as, notwithstanding of all the fiery Trials, sharpe Afflictions, sore Temptations, sad Exercises, cruel Persecutions, continual Tossings and Harassings and pinching Straits and Difficulties, that he may meet with, in his way, he may be helped unto a Christian Deportment, a Rejoicing
ever-

evermore, and a bearing of the cross with Joy, Valour, Christian Courage, undaunted Resolution and a fixed Stedfastness and Unmovableness in the way of the Lord: and so win to a life of faith, and through faith, in the midst of all the deathes, that he is to rancountre with, in his way, to the everlasting possession of that Crown of life, and of the Inheritance, that is Incorruptible and Undeiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto Salvation.

I shall now, in the prosecution of this Matter for the end mentioned, mentione and speak a little unto some other *Considerations*: such as.

CONSIDERATION. VIII.

It is the decreed will of God.

IF the afflicted soul, that is tossed with Tempests, and not comforted, and is like to sinck under the heavy burden of Affliction, Temptation and Tribulation, were considering aright, how that *affliction cometh not forth of the dust, nor trouble springeth*

not out of the ground, Job 5. 6. that is, That afflictions come not by meer Chance, neither have they all their Original from Inferiour agents, carnal and worldly Instruments; but there is an higher hand to be observed and espied in all, that the men of this world, the Instruments of Satan, devise and execute, and that there is an higher Resolution, Decree and Determination, to be heeded, than what is taken by man. If the afflicted soul (I say) were considering this, he would finde himself called to far other Thoughts and Meditations, than he hath, or can have, when his mind is onely porcing upon the secondary and far inferiour rise of his trouble, to wit, as from men. We see what course Peter took *Act. 4: 27, 28.* When thinking upon the rage of Enemies against our Lord, and against them, his Servants, for his sake; for of a truth (saith he) against thy holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilat; with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together; for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done. So *Act. 2: 23.* He tels them, who had been Instrumental, in killing of the Lord of life, that he was delivered by the determinat Counsel and fore knowledg of God, otherwise they had had no power over him.

It is the decreed will of God. 7

him. It is good and necessary for Believers to be alwayes, and then in particular, fixed in the faith of this, That nothing cometh to passe by chance or fortune (as we say:) but that all events, that fall out or come to passe, are from Eternity. freely and unchangably Ordained and Appointed by the unalterable Determination and Decree of the holy and wise Counsel of God: for *He worketh all things after the Counsel of his own will*, Ephes 1: 11. There is an unalterable Decree past in the grand Court of Parliament in heaven, concerning all Events, that fall out in the world; even such, as we would think to be most uncertaine and contingent, as events determined by lot, Prov. 16: 33. *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* What more uncertain, than that the souldiers should not handle Christ, after the same manner, that they handled the other two, who were crucified with him: and yet they broke not his bones, as they did the bones of the rest; and they pierced him, which they did not to the rest; and that because, it was determined of God, that not a bone of Christ should be broken, and also that he should be pierced; and that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, where mention was made of these determinations, as we

see in the Evangelists, besides many other meer (to us) accidental things, that befell him.

I know what difficulties some move about this matter, in sinful events, as all the Trouble, Affliction, and Persecution are, which the people of God meet with, at the hands of wicked Instruments, upon the account of their adhereing unto Truth, and following duty: But I shall purposely wave all disputes, at this occasion, and onely hold forth the Truth, and thereafter shew, how it ought to be improved unto advantage, in such exercising times.

I. Whatever Affliction, Cross, Trouble, Suffering, Trial or Tribulation, any of his are put to endure, in following of duty, it is not to be looked on, as an accidental, fortuitous event, or chance; but as determined of the Lord, who hath in his Sovereign wisdom and Counsel thought fit, to have it so; and ordered it, that it should be so, that his people in all ages, should meet with Opposition, Contradiction, Affliction, Crosses, or Persecution, at the hands of one or other: so that the Substance of the Trial and Exercise is to be looked upon, as ordained and determined of Jehovah: Such a determination, as this, must be the ground of that *Act. 14: 22.* — *And that*

It is the decreed will of God. 9

that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God : And of that, wick Paul saith Act 20: 23. though he knew not in particular what evils should befall him at Ierusalem, whither he was now going; yet he knew, that bonds and affliction did abide him; saying, Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, that bonds and affliction abide me. It was determined then that these, as pages of honour, should attend him, and should wait for his landing in every place he came unto. And yet more clearly he tels the Thessalonians, 1 Epist. 3: 3. That they knew, that he and the rest were appointed hereunto, that is, to afflictions; adding Vers. 4. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to passe, and ye know. Peter also, in his first Epistle, mindeth those, he writteth unto, of this, several times, and pointeth them unto this will of God, that they might eye it, that is, His determining, decreeing, and appointing will 1 Pet. 3: 17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that y. suffer for well doing, &c. And againe Chap. 4: 19. Wherefore, let them that suffer, according to the will of God, &c. From all which Testimonies, we see, that there is a Will, Determination, Resolution and Decree of the Ancient of dayes past, a-

nent the Afflictions, Trials, Tribulations and Sufferings of his people.

2. Not only is there a Decree and Determination past, in the Court of heaven, about the Sufferings of the people of God, in the *grosse* (as it were) and in general: but also the *special Kind* of the Crosse, or Affliction, that they meet with, or the *special manner*, or *quality* thereof. God hath not only decreed, that this or that man, this or that follower of Christ, shall meet with some Crosse and some Affliction, or other; but he hath determined the *species* and *kind* thereof; *to wit*, whether it shall be a cross as to his Body, or as to his Estate, or as to his Spirit; or as to several or all of these together; whether he shall be put to suffer Fineings, or Confinments, or Imprisonments, or Exile, or Death; whether Scourgings, Paines and Torments, or Harassings, Feares, Perils, or what ever it be. *Paul* knew, that *bonds* did abide him. The Lord determined, that *Abraham's* Posteritie should be strangers, in a Land, that was not theirs, & be made to serve *Gen. 15. vers. 13*. He determined that *Satan* should cast some of the Church of *Smirna* in prison, and that they should have tribulation, *Revel. 2: 10*. We know also, what was particularly threatned against *David*, *2 Sam. 12: 11*.

It is the decreed will of God. 11

3. As the Lord decreeth the Kind and Species of the Trial; so likewise he passeth a Determination, concerning all the *Ingredients* and *Parts* of the same. The trial possible is not one single Exercise, but one complicated, and compounded of many; a cup not of one pure liquor, but mixed of many ingredients; but of how many Ingredients so ever it be compounded, and of how many parts so ever it consist; yet all of them are particularly and determinatly decreed and appointed of the Lord. Many bitter ingredients were in the cup, which Christ got to drink; but all and every one of them fell under a plaine and peremptour determination of heaven. They were gathered together (saith Peter, in the fore-cited place) *to do whatsoever thy hand and thy Counsel determined to be done*: there was a whatsoever here: Nothing was or could be done, but what this Counsel of God had Determined to be done; and all that was done, was Determined by this Counsel.

4. The Degree, and Measure of the affliction, that His people are to meet with, is as particularly determined, as any circumstance thereof else: we know what Joseph's Brethren had intended against him, when thy said, *come let us slay him, and cast him into some pit*, Gen. 37: 20. But God had

not intended so much; and therefore they were made to change their minde, and to sell him to the *Midianites*, *Vers. 28.* And though thereby they thought they were quite of him for ever, and that he should remaine a slave to his dying day; yet we know it came otherwise to passe; they thought evil; but God meant it unto good *Gen. 50. vers. 20.* As the Lord had another end before his eyes, than they had; so he had determined, that they should not reach their end, nor do any more, than should contribute unto His end. The King of *Assyria* had it in his heart, to destroy and cut off Nations not a few. But God had another end in raising him up to be a scourge: and therefore suffered him not to do all he would, *Esa. 10: 6, 7, 12.* Upon this ground it is, that he debateth with his people in measure, when he sendeth forth his rod; and stayeth his rough winde in the day of his east winde *Esa. 27. 8.*

5. The Season and time of the affliction and trial is likewise determined of the Lord, which is another Circumstance, sometime very considerable, and weighty. He hath determined the minute of time, when it shall beginne, and with what occasion it shall be trysted. He determined the precise time, when the *Messiah* should be cut off,
after

It is the decreed will of God. 13

after threescore and two weeks , *Dan. 9*
vers. 26.

6. The Duration of the Trial is also determined by the unchangable decree of God , to a day , yea , to an houre and a minute. He decreed the length and duration of the affliction , that was to come upon the posterity of *Abraham*, four hundred and thirtie Years *Gen. 15: 13. Exod. 12. vers. 13.* And at the end of these Years, even the self same day , it came to passe, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the Land of Egypt, where these Years of servitude were to end. So he determined seventy Years for the captivity of *Judah* in *Babylon*, *Ier. 25: 12. and 29: 10. Dan. 9. vers. 2.*

7. He hath also determined who shall be the Instruments of the trouble , He said, he would *hisse for the flie* , *that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt* ; and for the bee , *that is in the Land of Assyria* , *Esai. 7: 18.* He appointed the ruine of *Judah* to be by the *Babylonians*, or *Caldeans*. He determined to raise evil against David, out of his own house, *2 Sam. 12: 11.*

These particulars might have been further enlaired , and confirmed ; but because I suppose the truth herein will not be denied, or questioned by the Lords people.

it will be much more useful to speak a few things, concerning the right use making of this Truth, That there is a Decree past in heaven from all Eternity, touching our Sufferings, and all the Ingredients and Circumstances thereof, concerning the manner and way of our troubles, the time when, and how long, the Instruments by whom, and all the other particulars considerable in the same: all are fixed by a peremptour and unalterable Determination.

Now the faith and beleeving Consideration of this would still, and calme the risings of our proud spirits, and the insolent stirrings of our corruptions, when the Affliction, that is bitter and unpleasant to the flesh, is lying on; and make us patiently endure all, and sweetly submit to all, saying, *the will of the Lord be done: Let him do what seemeth him good*; as good old Eli said, when he heard the determination of the Lord concerning him, and his family, wherein were many sad and bitter ingredients, as may be seen 1 Sam. 2. and 3. Chapters: and *god is the word of the Lord*, as good Hezekiah said, when he heard by Esaias, that the Lord had determined, that all that was in his house, and all which his fathers had laid up in store, untill that day, should be carried to Babilon, nothing should be left;
and

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and of his sones, that should issue from him, which he should beget, should they take away, and should be Eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon *Eesai. 39. vers. 6, 7, 8.* Whether.

(1.) Our thoughts be troubled at the kind of the Cross or Affliction, which is upon us; so as we are ready to say, had the Lord sent any other rod or affliction upon us, than this, wherewith we are exercised, we could better have borne it, Had he visited me (will one say) with *Poverty*, and not with *Disgrace*, I could have borne it: and another, had my affliction been any other, than just what it is, I could have comported with it; but the consideration of this, that God hath decreed, that *that*, even *that same* crosse, should be thy cross, and no other, will make the Soul sit down and say, seeing the Lord hath from all eternity appointed and shapen-out this, even this, and none else for me, I must bear it, and submit to his will, who is wiser, than I am, and seeth further than I do, and knoweth what is good and best for me, better than I my self do, His holy will be done. *This is a grief, and I must bear it*, saith *Jeremiah Ch. 10: 19.*

(2.) If our heart be troubled and vexed at the Consideration and thoughts of the
par-

particular Ingredients in and Parts of our mixed and compounded cup of affliction, whereof every one seemeth more bitter than another; and we be saying, we are compassed with evils on all hands; trouble of Body is upon us, and trouble of Mind also; we are wrestling with paines inward and outward, with poverty, with disgrace, with perils and hardships; and all at once: This will compose our spirits, if we call to mind, that God hath willed and decreed all this; He thought good to have it so; He hath ordered, as a wise Physician, all the Ingredients of our bitter cup: and what have we to say against him? *Job*, we know, had many a bitter ingredient in his cup, and this compesceth the tumultuatings of his spirit *Job* 23: 13, 14. *But he is in one mind, & who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doth. For he performeth the thing, that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him.* As if he had said, what He will do, He will do; none can turne him, or make him change his mind; He performeth what He hath appointed and decreed for me; and He can do much more yet, and what know I but he shall do much more against me, than he hath done? This did so far put him from quarrelling at what was done; that he was troubled and afraid

afraid at the thoughts of the Majesty and Sovereignty of this great King, who doth what he will; and so might adde yet more ingredients in his cup, as long as he was left breathing, and thereby make his case worse.

(3.) If the thoughts of the exceeding great weight and measure of the Trouble vex us; this may counter-work that, and calme us: if we should suppose, that God doth not measure-out our calamitie by drachmes and unces, but by pounds and stoneweights; and thereupon cry out, that our Trouble is greater, than we can bear, and give way to sinful murmurings and complainings: we should do well, in that case, to call this to mind, That all the doses are weighed and appointed for us from eternity, He hath measured every scruple or graine weight thereof; and what he hath appointed for us, we must have; He knoweth best, what dose or measure of such or such a simple, and what weight or quantity of all together will worke best on our humors: and this will helpe to calme our spirits; knowing that He hath determined all things according to infinite wisdom, according to the Counsel of his own will; and more than he hath appointed shall no man be able to inflict. He leaveth

veth not the measuring and weighing out of the ingredients of our calamitie, unto men or enemies : but himself doth it, by an unalterable Decree, that all the rage of Enemies can not change as to one asce, or in the hundereth part of one drachme. We hear what Christ said *Joh. 18: 11.* *The cup, which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* It is true, when the dregs of this cup, wherein was the Curse, was presented to him, his holy humane Nature, in a sinless manner, scunnered at it *Mat. 26: 39.* *If it be possible, let this cup passe from me:* Yet, as sweetly acquiescing in the Lord's Determination, he addeth, *Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done.* And againe *Vers. 42.* *O father, if this cup may not passe away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.* Bitter and sharpe was this cup, even to the highest degree; yet he viewed the will of God, appointing that he should drink it; and calmly submitted, and said, *not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

(4.) It is true, the Consideration of the season, in which we are exercised and trysted with such a trouble, may adde griefe to our sorrow; and we may say in our vexation, had this Trouble come upon us, at any other time, we could have better comported therewith; had it either come sooner,

er,

er, or later, we had been more able to have born it; but as it is come precisely at such a nick of time, it becometh a double burden unto us: Yet it will help to calme us, and compesce our turbulent spirits, to remember, that He, who knoweth all seasons, and all times, hath chosen this and no other, for the particular season, wherein we shall meet with such trials; and it could be no otherwise, than he hath willed; the trials behoved to come, at that very nick and minute, and no other: an ancient Determination passed thereupon, and no power under heaven could alter it, no not for one houre or minute.

(5.) When our thoughts are busied about the Duration of the Trouble; this Consideration of a Divine determination, past also thereupon, will contribute to our settling. We are ready to cry out when afflictions lye heavy upon our loines, oh will they ever come to an end: shall we never be redeemed herefrom? Shall we never see a good day again? And we are ready to conclude, that our hopes are perished, and we are cut off for our parts: as *Hezekiah* said when trouble lay upon him *Esai.* 38: 10, 11, 12, 13. *I said in the cutting off of my daies, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of mine years. I said, I shall*
not

not see the Lord, the Lord in the Land of the living, I shall behold man no more with the Inhabitants of the world; mine age is departed, and is removed from me, as a shepherds Tent. He will cut me off with pining sickness, from day even to night will thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that as a lion so will he break all my bones: from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me. The affliction, through the distemper of our spirits, raiseth such a mist before our eyes, that we can not see thorow the dark face of the dispensation. How oft do we limite the holy one of Israel, and say, if he come not before such a moneth, or such an year, we may conclude, that he will not come at all, and so need waite for him no longer: and the oftener, that our foolishly set & prefixed Periods go over, & the storm continueth, or groweth, our fainting & despondence groweth: especially when we consider, the evil disposition, rage and cruelty of Enemies: and see how their strength groweth, and providence seemeth to smile upon them. But now the faith of this, that He, who hath set bounds to the raging of the sea, saying, hithertill shalt thou come and no further, hath also bounded and limited the time, how long such a Calamity, or Trial shall endure, will sedate

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sedate our mindes, and keep us calme, and free of that discomposure of Spirit, that the thoughts of the restless Malice, incessant Rage, and cruel Hatred of the Enemies will and do usually cause; for do they what they can, God will observe the Periods prefixed by himself: his thoughts take place in all generations. And when our hearts are disquieted at the thoughts of the long continuance of the Affliction, the calling of this to remembrance, That the only wise God hath determined all the houres and minutes of its continuance, for his own holy ends, will prompt us to say, we cannot strive against the Almighty. Let us therefore waite His time, in patience; all our struggling will but perplex our selves the more; and all our endeavours to get free, will but contribute to our further entanglement: we shall not be able, do what we can, to Anticipate his day; and therefore it is best for us to minde the duty of the day, and lay aside all thoughts of using any unlawful meanes for our outgate, and waite in patience, untill his good time come.

(6.) As also the thoughts of the Instruments of our trouble and calamity may sadly affect us, as we see it did David Psal. 55: vers. 12, 13, 14. *It was not an Enemy, that reproached me, then I could have burnt it; neither*

ther was it he that hated me, that did magnifie himself against me, then I could have bin myself from him. But thou, a man, mine equal, or a man according to my rank, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. See Ps. 41:9. So many, upon this account, may say, If my trouble were brought unto me by any other hands, and instruments, I could comport the better with it; but when it is caused by such an one, my neer Relation, mine obliged friend, of whom I least expected any such thing, and unto whom I could have yeilded up my self, and all I had, how heavy must it needs be unto me? But the Consideration of this, That so it hath seemed good unto the only wise God, and Supream Sovereigne, may and should, and, when rightly beleaved and improven, will cause us lay our hand upon our mouth, and say, The good will of the Lord be done; Hath he determined, that such an one, and not another, shall occasion all my griefe and sorrow; shall be instrumentall in all my Calamities? good is the will of the Lord: though I would think, that if I were persecuted and troubled by others, it would be better, and I could bear it better, yet seing Infinite wisdom hath determined this

this circumstance of my calamity ; why should not I acquiesce ?

Thus we see , how this Consideration, rightly improv'd and duely beleev'd, will help such, as are under Affliction, Trouble, or Calamity , to a sweet, quiet, submissive and patient life : for

1. By this meanes, the soul will be freed from sinful murmurings , grudgings, frettings and repineings , at this or that Particular, this or that Instrument, or this or that other Circumstance , of its present Distress and Calamity ; in that hereby it will be made to see , that its murmuring thus is against the Lord , and against his Sovereignty , who determineth what he will , according to the good pleasure of his will , and is to give an account of his wayes and determinations to none.

2. This will help unto a Christian Patience under all , that God thinketh good to lay on ; and to endure patiently without wearying untill his good time come : for they will easily see , that it is not for them to strive against the Almighty ; or to think to cause Him alter his Purposes and Resolutions, seeing He is of one mind, and none can turn him.

3 This will teach Christians sweetly to comply with all the holy determinations of God ,

God, concerning their sufferings, and to say heartily and cheerfully, *The will of the Lord be done*; as those did, who were perswading Paul not to go up unto Jerusalem, and found that he would not be perswaded. *Act. 21: 14.* O what a sweet life is this, to be sailing with the stream of God's eternall Determinations; and to be embracing and kissing every Dispensation, we meet with, how sharp and bitter so ever it be, because it is Determined by the absolute Sovereigne and Lord of Heaven and Earth! How light and easie doth this make every load, that is lying upon our shoulders, when we bear it as bound upon us by an everlasting Decree?

4. This will help unto a life of practical Praising of the Lord, as Absolute Sovereigne: for when the event is submitted unto and sweetly embraced, because determined by a fixed Decree of the Lord Jehovah, the soul doth thereby declare, and acknowledge His Sovereignty; and upon the matter, by practice, in submission, even though silent, doth Celebrate the praises of that Absolute Sovereigne, who is God over all, blessed for ever; whileas such, upon the contrary, who fret and rebell against the Lord's Determinations, by refusing to give that sweet hearty submission

sion, that is requisite, do give a practical declaration of their not beleaving and acknowledging of Him to be the Sovereigne Lord of all.

5. The thoughts of this will free the soul of many heart-perplexing soul-distracting, disquieting and renting thoughts; such as these; If this had not been, or if I had not been in such a place, or had not done such or such a thing. I had been free of all this; so that every thought of every thing, that had but a far-off and remote tendency unto the occasioning of the trouble, is enough to distract, disquiet and perplex the man (I do not mean here sins occasioning, or bringing on of trouble; for these should be thought on and mourned for; which will not marre this furable frame of Spirit; but other things, about which our thoughts are more readily conversant, in such a time:) and beside these thoughts of what hath been done, or not done, in times by past, there are other thoughts of what may yet further be, and how that may be prevented, which may not a little urhinge and disquiet the soul. Now from all such is the soul freed, by the beleaving thoughts of God's eternal Decree concerning their trouble, and all the way of its coming to passe, and the occasion, and all other circumstances,

stances, how and by whom, it was brought on. Here the soul will finde such a satisfying subject of Meditation, that other disquieting thoughts will be quickly hush'd to the door, and the soul will finde no leasure for them.

6. Hereby will the soul be keeped from poreing upon, and too much eying of the motions of the under-wheels of Creatures, and instruments of the trouble and calamitie, which will rather cause a reeling, and giddiness, and hence occasione a staggering and falling, than any stayedness or establishment; because hereby the soul will be brought to fix its eye upon that one wheel of the Lords, that moveth evenly fixedly, and invariably, in the midst of all the wheels of men, the motions whereof are so irregular, eccentric, and so opposite and contrarious one to another.

7. Hereby is the beleever helped to win to that life of tasting and feeling the sweet of that serenity of soul, that a filial disposition possesseth the man of, by an holy, humble, son-like submission and subjection of soul unto the good will of the Lord: When this submission is yeilded unto, the Supream will of God, upon Christian Grounds and Considerations, the soul is in a manner brought into the suburbs of heaven,

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ven, and enjoyeth an heavenly serenity and peace of minde, whereby it is in case to sing under all its sorrowful pressures, and the confused noise of such as are the Agents and Instruments of all the calamity; and the beleaving thoughts of the Sovereigne will of God, ordering and appointing all, is a singular help hereunto.

8. The beleever is hereby put without the reach of many a Temptation, and is strengthened against them; whether to use unwarrantable means to be delivered from the Trouble and Distress incumbent; or to prevent, what may be further imminent, and is to be feared; or to vent his displeasure against the Instruments of all the calamity; or the like: for here will be an antidote at hand, The Lord ordereth and disposeth of all things, according to His own holy and wise will: and nothing can come to passe, but what He hath decreed; and what He hath decreed shall come to passe, and that when, and neither sooner nor later, and how, and by whom He hath decreed, and no other wayes; what have I then more to do, but to minde my present duty, and welcome what the Lord's will determineth for me, will he say.

There are these Three particulars, which set home this Consideration, and promov-

eth thereupon this work of Submission, and hearty acquiesceing unto the will and determination of God ; and which should be thought upon to this end.

1. The Lord is in all his Determinations and Decrees unalterable, as he is unchangeable in himself, there being no variableness or shadow of turning with Him *Jam. 1. vers. 17.* And if it were otherwise, He could not be infinitely Wise in himself, or not Almighty, and Irresistible by others, for any alteration, that might be in the determinations of his will, must either flow from new and second thoughts in himself: and so He were not Intinitely wise, or from inability to effectuatur or through his former Determinations, and therefore must take new measures; and so He were not Almighty. Now the Soul should think with it self, Should I wish, or desire, that the Lord's will were not done, that He should not be able to do whatsoever he will *Psal. 115: 3. and 135 6* or that any of his everlasting Purposes and Decrees should fail, and not take effect; or that He should alter his purposes and lay his conclusions of new? Then I should wish, He were not God; for the true God is a God that changeth not *Mal. 3: 6.* and a God, whose Purposes cannot fail; for they have a hand with them

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them to effectuatall *Eesai.* 14:26. as he pur-
poseth, so shall it stand *Esa* 14:24. Who can
disanull what He purposeth? *Verf.* 27. And
what he purposeth, he will also do *Eesai.* 46:
v.11. So that if I should once imagine, that
His decrees could alter upon one account,
or other, I should in so far deny the true &
living God. And if one of his purposes could
alter, why not another? & how then should
I think, that his purpose according to electi-
on should stand? *Rom.* 9:11. & 8:28. *Ephes.* 1:
v.11. & 3:10, 11. 2 *Tim.* 1:9. And if there
were the least ground of doubt here, where
were all my Hop, Comfort & Confidence?
Therefore would the beleever say; Because
it is my joy & comfort, that His purposes
fail not, and that He is a God that cannot
change, but whom he loveth, he loveth
to the end; therefore will I with joy sub-
ject my self unto all his decreed Dispensa-
tions towards me, how hard so ever they
may seem to flesh; because He is Unchang-
able and Almighty, and thereupon hang-
eth all my Hope and Salvation.

2. All his determinations and decrees are
for his own glory. He worketh all things,
according to the Counsel of his own will,
that we should be to the praise of his Glory
Ephes. 1:11, 12. He maketh all things for
Himself *Prov.* 16:4. Hence the beleiving

foul reasoneth with himself, Shall I stand in the way of God's getting his glory? He hath determined this to befall me, for his own glory; and should I wish it to be other-ways? Should I not comply with his holy designe of glorifying himself, by this his Dispensation towards me? Should I not acquiesce in all the meanes and methods, His infinit wisdom hath thought upon, and He, in infinite wisdom, hath determined to make use of, for glorifying of his own name? Should not I be satisfied with his being exalted? Nay, should not this Consideration, that hereby God will be glorified, make mine heart sing under all my sorrow: & cause me conclude all my meditations on His dispensations towards me, as Paul did his Discourse *Rom. 11. For of him, & through him, & to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen. v. last.*

3: As all that God hath decreed to do in the world, is for his own glory; so all that he hath determined to do with, or to bring upon His own people, who are called according to the election of grace, is for their good, according to that *Rom. 8: 28. And we know, that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Hence the Godly Soul can reason, Shall I be against mine own good and advantage? Shall I wish

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wish that things were otherwise, than they are, when the only Wise and Gracious God hath ordered and ordained them so, for my good? He hath made many noble connexions, in his Purposes, that I see not: and seeing He hath said, that all things work together for good to such as love Him, and are called according to his purpose, why should I not beleeve against sense and carnal reason? Am I able to search out the Almighty unto perfection? Can I finde out all the depths of his Counsel and Wisdom? Shall I think then that he can bring about my good and felicity, by no meanes, and dispensations, but such as I am satisfied with? Shall I measure the unsearchable riches of his Wisdom and Counsel thus? Shall I rebell against his Dispensations, and fret and murmur against Him, who dealeth thus and thus with me, because I see not, how He can bring about my everlasting advantage hereby? No: Nay rather because his word is true, beleeving the same, I will embrace the sharpest of Dispensations, He is pleased to tryt me with, and waite to see how infinit Wisdom shall make good, what Truth it self hath said:

Thus we see, how the Consideration of the *decreed will of God* can preserve the Christians life, in worst of times.

CONSIDERATION. IX.

It is the Commanding will of God.

CHristian souls have much Peace, and joy, when they are going about a commanded duty, and they know upon good grounds, that what they are going about is a commanded duty, notwithstanding of the many Hazards, Difficulties, Pinches and Distresses, they are put to, in the prosecution thereof: and when they are called to suffer, and to lye under outward Trouble and Affliction, are oftentimes under much sadness of heart, and disquietment of mind, upon this account, among others, That they know not, if their suffering be according to the will of God, and whether or not they have ground to expect God's approbation; which if they saw clear ground to beleeve and look for, they would be no more disquieted, than when going about other clear and necessary duties. It will be useful therefore and advantagious to such, as meet with a suffering life, to know some thing, whereby they may come to understand, how and what way they may,

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may, or may not be called of God to suffer.

I grant, that Suffering, as it is a meer *passion*, doth not properly fall under a command: But the Choosing, Embracing, patient, cheerful, courageous and Christian Enduring of Sufferings and Affliction fall under a command; and this is all the subject of our present enquire, That we may know, when we are to judge our selves called of God to choose Affliction with the people of God, and to undergo it with courage and patience, knowing that in so doing, we are approven of God.

In order therefore to the clearing up of this, we would know, That as there is a time, when God calleth to valiant acting and appearing and hazarding lives and fortunes, and all for Him, and His interest, and to jeopard our lives, on the high places in the field, and to come forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty, as we would escape the Curse of *Meroz Judg. 5:23*. So there is a time, when He, who only can change seasons and times, calleth for Valiant Suffering and to become a companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ. And this appeareth from these particulars.

1. There is a particular gift of God for this Suffering, as wee see *Phil. 1. vers. 29. Unto you it is given not only to beleieve on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* And when God giveth a gift for such a peculiar work, it saith, there is a time and season, when that gift is to be imployed and exercised, for he giveth not gifts to lye by us and rust, or to be hid in a napkin under ground.

2. There are peculiar duties called-for at the hands of Christians, relative only or mainly unto a suffering time; as *Taking up the Cross, Patience, Being faithful unto the death Revel. 2: 10. Holding fast Christ's name, and not denying his faith Vers. 13. Keeping Christs works unto the end Vers. 26. Keeping of Christs word, and not denying his name, Revel. 3. v. 8. Keeping the word of Christs patience V. 10. Keeping fast and not casting away our Confidence Heb. 10: 35. and the like: All which say, there is a time for suffering, and witnessing to the truth by suffering.*

3. The many motives and encouragements given to bear up the hearts of sufferers, say, that the people of God have such a lot to look for, and must lay their account to meet with Trials and Tribulations for adhering to truth.

4 The many Instances and examples of valiant and stedfast Sufferers before us, recorded

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corded for our Instruction, and Information, say, there is such a season, wherein such, as would stand fast in the faith, can look for nothing but sharp trials for the Name of Jesus.

5. The forewarnings given to such, as will follow Christ, to take up withall their cross Mat. 16: 24. And that through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God, Act. 14: 22. And that all who will live godly, in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution 2 Tim. 3. vers. 12. That we should not think strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try us, as though some strange thing hapned unto us 1 Pet. 4. vers. 12 These and the like confirme this matter.

6 Christ, the Captaine of our Salvation, was made perfect through sufferings Heb. 2: 10. & He himself hath told us Mat. 10: 24, 25 That the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord, & that, it is enough for the Disciple that he be as his Master, & the Servant as his Lord: & that, if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? And we are bidden look unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosse, despising the shame: And to consider him, that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and

sainte in our mindes, Hebr. 12: 2, 3. And we are told 1 Petr. 2: 21. That even hereunto we are called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. And againe Chap. 4: 1. Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, we should arme our selves likewise with the same mind. All which and the like say, that a Suffering lot is abiding the followers of Jesus; and that it is the will of God they should prepare for it.

7. Some special works there are, which God hath upon the wheels to perfect, and these call for a suffering season; such as the trial and discovery of the sincerity of His grace in His own, as also the exercise and promoting thereof; for tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hop. Rom. 5: 3, 4. So the trying of faith worketh patience Jam. 1: 3. See also 1 Pet. 1. vers. 7. and 4: 12. As also the discovery of the rottenness and hypocrisie of a Professing generation, who want root, and so must wither, when the scorching sun of persecution ariseth Mat. 13: 5, 21. For this is as a small sieve. So also the discovery of the Maliciouness and wickedness of Enemies, which lay hid and latent, before it gote a seasonable vent, when their hour and power of darkness cometh. Luk. 22: 53.

8. This

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8. This may be confirmed by expresse Testimonies of Scripture, such as 1 Pet. 2. vers. 19, 20, 21. *For this is thank-worthy (or grace) if a man for conscience toward God, endure griefe, suffering wrongfully. — But if when ye do well & suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable (or grace, or favour) with God.* For even hereunto were ye called. It must then be a commanded duty, and obedience to a command, that rendereth a man gracious and acceptable with God. So 1 Pet. 4: 19. *Wherefore let them that suffer, according to the will of God.* &c. this is according to his will of command. So Heb. 10: 39. *The will of God*, there mentioned, is, as we explained it, his will of command, which was done by enduring patiently, for the Profession of the truth, a whole fight of afflictions; their patient suffering being noble service to their Lord and Master. By all which we see, that there are some times and seasons, wherein the people of God are called to suffer.

If it be enquired. When is that Time and Season, wherein the people of the Lord are called to suffer? The answer is easie: *to wit*, when the red horse (spoken of Revel. 6: 4.) is sent forth, and power is given to him, that sitteth thereon, to take peace

from the earth; and for that end, hath given unto him a great sword; that is, when Truth and the Profession thereof is persecuted; when Tribulation or Persecution ariseth because of the Word; as it is *Mat. 13:26*. When men must be slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimonie, which they hold *Revel. 6:9*. When the Truth and the open Profession thereof, is questioned and opposed, then are the followers of Christ called to suffer rather than to sin, and upon all hazards to hold fast the Profession of their faith without wavering, not forsaking even the assembling of themselves together *Heb. 10:23, 25*. Then are they to make *Moses's* choice; that is, chuse rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season *Heb. 11:25*. When any of the revealed Truthes of God are opposed, and such as owne the same are maligned, hated and persecuted, that is the Season; wherein the Lord calleth all His to embrace any suffering, rather than deny His Truth, and the word of His Patience. It is spoken to the commendation of the Church of *Pergamos Revel. 2. vers. 13*. That though dwelling where *Satans* seat was, yet she held fast *Christ's* name, and did not deny His faith, even in these daies, wherein *Antipas*,
Christ's

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Christ's faithful Martyr, was slain. So that it is Christ's will and command, that all his followers should abide stedfast, faithful and unmovable in owning of his Truth and Cause, his Word and Interest, on all hazards.

But some will possibly enquire, How shall I know, whether or not, I in particular be called to suffer? *Answer.* We are not to expect any extraordinary Revelation, or Declaration of God's mind, in this particular; though I grant, the Lord may condescend, in love and pity to some weak persons, to give some more than ordinary intimation of his will, whether by some secret and forcible impulse upon their Spirits; or by some influence of comfort and encouragement, whereby they are enabled to despise the shame, and to endure the cross, as seeing the joy set before them; and are strengthened against the feares of men, even of the greatest and most terrible, as seeing Him, who is Invisible. But these outflowings of his Love and Tenderneſs, not being the Rule of our duty, we must not think, that we are never called to hazard on suffering, untill we meet with some such Dispensation of his free grace. Nor must we waite for some singular Intimation, made by some more than ordinary light, given to

to discover the Truth, and the Importance thereof, for owning of which we are exposed to suffering; The Revelation of the Truth, made by Jesus Christ, in his Word, is the only ground of our faith, & our faith thereunto is called for, though we want such rare communications of Light, bearing home the soul-captivating perswasion of the Truth & its concernments, over all possibility of doubting or hesitating in the least; for these are not our Ground or Rule of faith, but soveraigne and special helps to strengthen our faith, and to fix us more upon our ground. But the ground of our Suffering, and that which we should look upon as a call from God, to choose suffering, is the Lord's command, to owne and avow His Truth: so that when the Lord, in His Holy and Wise Providence, ordereth matters so, as that we must either suffer, or sin, in denying His word, or any point of Truth, revealed in his word; and so either Suffer or forsake our Duty; then are we to look upon our selves, as called of God to choose suffering, rather than sin: When, as it were, Sin and Suffering are laid before us, that we may make our choise, and there is no third thing to demurre us, nor any faire and lawful way to escape the suffering, but by sinning; then with *Moses* in that forecited

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cited place, *Heb. 11:2*. We are to preferre Suffering before Sinning, and that according to the will of God. This deed of *Moses*, in chusing rather to suffer a censure with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, was a rare Act of faith; and consequently an act of obedience; faith being no blind act, but walking upon the ground of a command. When then we can not evite suffering, but by sinning in denying the Truth, or in not adhering to it, or not Professing of it, according to the will of God, we suffer for well doing. This is it, that is acceptable unto God, and that to which we are called, *to wit* That we take it patiently, when we do well and suffer for it. This is to endure grief, suffering wrongfully, for conscience towards God, and which is thankworthie *1 Pet. 2. vers. 19, 20, 21.*

Hence we see, that it must be Truth, and the Word of Christ, that must be suffered for; else we cannot be said to suffer for Conscience towards God, nor for well doing. If a Person be under the Power of an Erroneous Conscience, taking that for Truth, which is nothing but Errour, his suffering in defence thereof, and for adhering thereto, is not suffering for well doing, nor for conscience towards God, nor have
such

such any call from God to suffer upon that account; and yet if, for fear of suffering, any such should deny that, which they apprehended to be truth, they should virtually deny the truth of God, and sinne; because they should deny that, which they took to be the truth of God; and if it had been really the truth of God, they would have denied it, no less than now they have done, though they did mistakingly apprehend it to be the truth of God, when it was not. In this case, there is no preventing of sin, but by laying by the blinded and erroneous Conscience; that is, by laying aside the mistake and error, and receiving right Information concerning the Truth. And therefore, when a time of trial cometh, and persecution ariseth upon the account of the Testimony of Jesus, and of his Word, all, who would be found faithful in that day of trial, should labour to have the Word dwelling in them richly, to be rooted and grounded in the Truth, to be receiving and drinking in the Truthes of God, and to have all grounded upon the infallible Word of Truth, that what they owne and hold may be the sure and undoubted Truth of Jesus, and so a part of his Testimony. And for this Cause, they would be living neer to Him, who is the Truth, that being taught
of

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of Him, and receiving the Truth, as it is in Jesus, they may be in case to assert and owne the same, upon all hazards, and so fitted for witnessing to the Truth, and for holding fast Christs Word; and nothing else.

But some may say, Though we know and beleve the Truth, that is opposed: Yet we are not able to maintaine it against learned Adversaries, nor to answer their contrary Arguments and Objections; How can we suffer upon the account of such a piece of truth, which we have not skill and understanding to defend against cunning Adversaries? *I Answ.* Though it is true, Men of great parts, and abilities to plead and argue for truth, would seem to have a great advantage, in such a day of trial; yet experience proveth, that such as are far inferior unto them, as to parts and abilities, will be helped to faithful witness-bearing to the Truth, when they may shamefully decline that Duty. Suffering is a peculiar gift, & doth not alwayes accompany the gift of learning. And I doubt, it be required of all Christians, to be able to disput for the truth, and to answer all the Sophismes of cunning Adversaries; yet it is required of all, that they contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered unto the
Saints

Saints *Jud. 3.* and that they stand fast in the faith, *1 Cor. 16: 13.* and in the Lord *Phil. 4: v. 1. 1 Thes. 3: 8.* and hold fast Christs Name and the Word of his Patience, and not deny his Faith and Name *Revel. 2: 10, 13, and 3: v. 8, 10.* and that they keep his Word *Revel. 3: 8.* It is the Duty of all to receive the Truth, and the Love of the Truth; and when the truth in its Love and Loveliness is received, then it sincketh into the heart; and such, though they cannot Disput for the Truth, yet can suffer for it; and not deny it, upon any termes. Though they have but a little strength, yet they will keep his Word, as is spoken to the Commendation of the Church of *Philadelphia Revel. 3: v. 8.* Truth is Truth, though we be not able to defend it again^t Sophisters, and to stop the mouth of gaine-sayers, and the Truth, as it is in Jesus, and as it is a part of his Testimonie, who is the Truth, should be owned and maintained by suffering. The Primitive Christians, who suffered martyrdom for the Truth, were not all able to answer the Cavils and Sophismes of a *Celsus* and a *Porphyrus*, and others, who imployed their learning and parts against the Truth; yet having received the love of the truth, and embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ, no sufferings nor torments could
move

Commanding will of God. 45

move them to a forsaking or denying of the same ; They did keep Christs word, and would not deny his Name.

But may some say , what if the point of Truth , upon which I am questioned and staged , be but small , and of no great consequence , and many moe than I do so judge it ; must I hazard on suffering , upon the account thereof , and think that God will accept of me therein ? *Answer.* Let the point of truth be never so small and inconsiderable , whether in thine own eyes , or in the eyes of others ; yet it being a part of the Truth of God , and of the Revelation of Jesus Christ , it is a part of that Name of Christ's , which should not be denied ; and of that Word , which should be kept. Satan may move Persecuters to urge but small things at the beginning , that thereby he may make way to greater ; knowing that if once Professors cede in smaller matters , they are the fairer to be prevailed with in greater things ; for having forsaken the Lord in lesser , they are out of the ordinary rode of meeting with promised help and assistance , when they are questioned upon greater things. Who love Truth for Truth's sake , and upon the account that it is the Truth of Jesus , will love the last of divine truths , and therefore will not deny it ,
because

because it is a part of the Name of Christ, every part whereof is sweet and desirable unto the gracious soul. On the other hand, who forsake and deny Truth, because it is small, and inconsiderable, will hold no Truth, as the Name and Word of Christ, and so will be faire to deny the greatest; who suffer not for the Truth, as it is the Truth, and because it is the Truth of Christ, cannot be said to suffer for conscience toward God, and as holding fast the Name of Jesus, and the word of his patience. And such as are willing to suffer for the Truth, upon this account, will suffer upon all Truth, how small so ever it may seem to be, if it be a part of the word of His Testimony. The Testimonie to the Truth is not to be estimat, according to the greatness or weightiness of the Truth, upon which the Testimony is called for; but rather on the contrary, that may be accounted a great Testimony, which is for a small Truth (to speak comparatively, for indeed no part of Christ's truth should be accounted small) because it argueth great love to the Truth, and Zeal for it; it argueth much singleness, and honesty; and so is much to the glory of God: such as are thus faithful in a very little, may be much esteemed of by the Lord, and have rule over many cities. The
denying

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denying of or not witnessing unto the meanest Truth, in a stated case of Confession, is a being ashamed of Christ and of his Truth; and who are ashamed of or deny Him before Men, He will deny them before His Father, which is in heaven. The least sin must not be committed to shun suffering; but the denying of, or not bearing witness unto any of the Truthes of Christ, in a day of trial, is no small iniquity: and therefore (as we said) we are to look upon our selves as called of God to suffer, when we can not avoid it but by finning.

Yet some may say, when the thing required is manifestly sinful and unrighteous, the call to suffering rather, in that case, seemeth very clear and unquestionable; and when it is so, the person may have much peace and calmness within, but when the question seemeth more disputable, the call must needs be less clear, that one hath to suffer upon that account; and an unclear call cannot but creat much perturbation of mind, and perplexity. *Ans.* A call may be Gods call, wherein or whereabout, there may be much unclearness: It is said of Abraham Heb. 11: 8. *That by faith, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an Inheritance, he obeyed, and went out, though, as it is added, not knowing*

ing whither he went. It seemeth good in the Lord's eyes, not to make every ones call alike clear and unquestionable, that their faith and obedience may be the more tried. Some have their call to suffering written, as it were, with sun beames, so clearly and distinctly, that he who runneth may read it: others have their duty and call written with smaller letters, which every one cannot read; and yet this be no lets the call of God, than the other. The call which the three Children had to suffer, was clear and unquestionable; it being such an act of manifest Idolatry which was enjoined them; that none acquainted with the law of God, could have the least scruple, touching its horrid iniquity; The call againe which *Moses* had, rather to suffer, than to be called the Son of *Pharaohs* Daughter, would seem not to have been so legible and clear to all; and yet it was the true call of God, for by faith he obeyed this call. So *Daniel's* call to hazard rather on the lions, than forbear prayer to the God of heaven, seemeth more clear and legible than *Mordecai's* call to hazard his own life, and the life of all the Jewes, before he would bow, and do reverence unto *Haman* the *Amalakite* and yet this was found to be the true call of God. In the primitive times, the case seemed

seemed clear and unquestionable, when Christians were commanded to renounce Christianity, to give up their Bibles, as renouncing the same, or to burne incense to Idols, or to build a Temple to Idols, or suffer death; but when their life was offered unto them, on condition, they would but give any old paper or clout, in stead of the poors coats; or would give a small summe of money, wherewith to helpe to build the temple to the Idol God, one would think their call to suffer was more dark: and yet these worthy witnesses would not redeem their life at such a rate: Yea, if the souldiers, weary in executing of them, should have violently plucked any such thing from them against their wills, as desirous of the smallest seeming Victory, they would not consent, but run after them declaring their adherence to the truth; and *Marcus Arethusius* would not give one penny to the building of the Idol Temple.

If it be said, But what if by some Imprudent, or Unnecessary act or other, I have occasioned the trial and trouble to my self; Can I in this case suppose, that I am called of God to suffer. *I Ans.* It is true, that some unnecessary, or not every way commendable act or other, may give the first rise or occasion to our trouble; and yet when suffer-

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ings

ings are not purely upon that account, nor for that cause: but stated upon another ground; we may notwithstanding of this imprudent or unnecessary occasioning of the trial to ourselves, look upon ourselves as called of God to suffer, rather than to deny Him, or any part of His Truth. It is observed by some of *Paul*, that the occasion of his last trouble, mentioned *Act. 21.* to wit his hearkening to the advice of *James* and the Elders of *Jerusalem*, was a thing which he might well have forborne, yea and refused, and therein have walked consonant unto both his former Doctrine, Practice and Writtings, by all which, before this time, he had declared, that the Ceremonial Law was not obliging; Christ, the special end and substance of all these shadowes, being now come, and having established the Gospel way of worship: and others, though they will not blame *Paul*, nor think he dissembled in what he did, yet they think *James* and the rest should have forborne to have pressed him to do what they urged him to do. Yet we see, that notwithstanding of this, which gave the rise and occasion to these his last sufferings, this not being the ground, or cause, for which he was persecuted; but his maintainance of the Gospel, and opposing of the necessary

ry observation of the Law of Moses , which was now abrogate, he is in all his sufferings, which followed hereupon , owned of God, and approven of him.

If it be said , Though I dar not deny the Truth , upon which I am challenged and staged , nor dar I say , but I am suffering for Truth , and that I could not have shunned this affliction , but by sinning ; yet I am made to doubt of God's call and warrand , because He hideth his face from me , yea He hideth himself from me , more than ever. This causeth me suspect , that all is worg ; and that I have run , in this matter, without his warrand and allowance. I

Ans. This is no certaine ground , whereupon to draw such a conclusion. These out-lettings of his free grace , and sensible significations of his favour , are dispensed according to the Sovereignty of his will and pleasure. A person therefore may have an unquestionable call and warrand to hazard on suffering , when he cannot other-ways do , unless he would sinne , though he misse these soul-comforting , and heart-establishing blainks of His face. How oft do we finde the Saints of God in Scripture, cry out of the hiding of God's face, when outward trouble was lying heavy upon them ? As in *Iob* and *David* ; and why may

not the Lord dispense thus with others? I grant the Trial and the Exercise is, upon this account, the greater: but what do we know, but the Lord be ordering matters so, in his holy wisdom, for our further trial, and for the exercise of faith? It is easie to swimme (we say) when the head is born up above the water. And if the Lord thinketh good to double our Trials, ought we not sweetly to submit? His word should satisfie us; and He hath promised enough to him, that overcometh: We ought to remember our duty, that is, hold fast what we have, till he come, and He will come quickly, *Revel. 2. vers. 25. and 3. vers. 11.* If He will have us venturing upon faith, why should we not glorifie him thereby? He knoweth, when the fittest season is of intimating his favour and acceptance. That holy martyr, that complained of this want, all the time he was in prison, yet while going to the stake was made to cry out, *He is come, He is come.*

Let us now speak a word unto the improving of this Consideration, to the end, we may see, how it can contribute unto life, in an evil time.

I. This Consideration may calme and quiet the Sufferer, and may make him enjoy peace within, whatever trouble he meet
with

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with from without ; because, hereby he understandeth, that he is about his Master's work, he is following dutie, and walking in a commanded path, whatever trouble he meet with ther-in : So whatever other thing occurre, to cause disquietment, this may bear him thorow all, that he is in the way of duty, and obeying the command of the great Lord and Law-giver. Christians use to pacifie their own spirits with this, when they meet with unexpected crosses and disappointments, That they were following their duty : So this may quiet them under all their Tossings, Troubles, Persecutions and Vexations, that they have sinfully occasioned none of these things, nor by their sin and folly brought them on themselves.

2. When on-lookers are ready to condemne them of Foolly, Rashness, Inconsideratness, Pertinaciousness, and the like, this Consideration ; That they are about a commanded duty, may counterballance all ; for then they may know, that whoever condemne them, their Lord and Master will approve of them ; and how ever men construe of their doings, He will account their Sufferings loyal and faithful service to Him.

3. The consideration of this will helpe
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the Beleever to a life of Patience and Submission , without fretting at their lot : for sure the honest beleever hath engaged himself unto God , and hath promised absolute obedience unto him in all things , and to take up his cross and yoke , whatever it be , that God shall think good to appointe for him : and without all doubt , he is to have respect to all the commands of God , and is obliged to carry as a Son and as a Servant ; and therefore must willingly and with sweet submission do any piece of service , that is laid upon him , & go about any commanded duty with cheerfulness , because it is commanded , how unpleasant so ever it be to the flesh . The honest beleever will say , I have given up my self to His service , and count it my glory to be called , the Servant of God ; and why should I not go willingly and cheerfully , and with heart and hand , without all repineing or murmuring , about any piece of service He is pleased to put in my hand ? I made no reserves nor exceptions , when I resigned and gave up my self unto Him ; and why should I not now submit to all He commandeth ? Sure , it is He who is Lord and Master , and so must command and give-out orders ; I am but a servant , a sworn-servant , and am highly advanced , when I am called and
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accounted a servant to him , and therefore must not carve-out my own work , and service , but be under Authority , and go and abide , or do this or that , or bear this or that burden , as commanded. It is not seemly for a childe , or for a servant , or for a souldier to quarrel with his Father , Master , or Cominader , for putting him to any piece of service ; but rather sweetly to acquiesce , and run cheerfully about what is commanded : And (should the beleever say) it is more unseemly for me to quarrel with God , who is my Father , Master , and Commander , upon a more noble and substantial an account , for any piece of service He putteth in my hands : I never covenanted with Him , upon condition , He should not call me to suffering , or put any piece of service in my hand , that was not eaie and sweet to the flesh. So that the Consideration of this would certainly move to submission , and shoot-out all contrary thoughts , which distract and disquiet the soul , and make his spirit bitter , and his life less lively and comfortable.

4. Hereby would the beleever be helped to a life of Patience and Longsuffering , under the trial and Tribulation , when continueing long , and like yet to continue longer , without fainting or wearying : for

the honest soul would think with it self, I should not weary of prayer, nor of hearing the word, nor of any other religious duty; and why should I weary of the cross, seeing the bearing of it, christianly and handsomely, is as much my duty, and an act of obedience to Him, when He calleth thereunto, as is Prayer, or the like, in their season. There is a time, when He calleth for valiant acting, there is also a time, when He calleth for Christian suffering; and every thing is beautiful in its season: and if the season be longer, than we would desire; yet the Supreme Lord of Times and Seasons, He knoweth better than I, how long such a season should endure; and so long as He thinketh fit to appointe the season, so long is the duty seasonable and pleasant, that is called for in that season.

5. This would also help forward the inward Satisfaction of the Believer; for hereby he might see, that how unworthy and inconsiderable soever he thought his own sufferings; yet the Lord would get glory thereby; seeing he might easily understand, that the Lord would set him about no employment or service, but such as would be for his own glory: the husband man will not command his servants to plow-up some
cumber

cumbersome piece of ground wherein they must meet with much labour and toyl, if he saw not how to reap some fruit thereby; nor will God set any of His servants about an irksome piece of work, if he saw not advantage to be had thereby to his Name, Interest and Glory: The faith of this, That God will get glory by their sufferings, that being a piece of work He hath put them about, who doth nothing in vaine, and whose glory is advanced by our obedience to His commands, will quiet the heart of the honest beleever, while he is sweating in tugging and toiling at that troublesome work. And when such thoughts as these prove troublesome unto the honest heart-ed beleever, Alas I am out of case now, while thus shut up in prison, to go about my Christian duties, with my Christian Neighbours, wherein I was wont to rejoice, and God was glorified; I cannot get Him now so served and glorified, and his praises solemnly sung, in the publick Assemblies of his people. This may satisfy and comfort him. That now he is called unto this piece of service, and by his Christian deportment herein, God will be as much glorified, as He was by his Christian exercises, while at liberty; That now he hath as good occasion, to advance in his

Principal work of glorifying God, though upon another account, as when he was employed in the most solemne service, that Christians are called to.

6. This consideration will also promote their life of inward Contentment and Satisfaction, under their suffering lot, in that they will thereby be helped to see, that as God will thereby get his due rent of praise and glory (as we said :) so their own spiritual advantage and spiritual life will be promoted thereby, if they foolish'y hinder it not by their unchristian deportment under the crosse. All obedience hath a native tendency to promote the spiritual good of Christians, they walk and go from strength to strength, in the pathes of obedience, The doing of God's will is the exercise of the Christian life, and the Christian's life is made more and more lively by this exercise: So that, all these Tribulations, or Afflictions, are so far from hindering their spiritual growth and advancement in grace, that on the contrary they promote the same, when the Christian is helped, through grace, to yeeld obedience unto the good will of God, in undergoing that lot and dispensation, in a Christian manner, even because the Christian is then in the way of
God,

God, and carrying as a submissive obedient Son and Servant ought to do.

7. Hereby, (which will also prove advantageous to their spiritual life) they will see, How Satan is disappointed of the two great Ends, he aimeth at, in raising up Persecution against the people of God: *to wit*, the dishonour of God, and the hurt and undoing of the Child of God; neither of which he can at taine by this mean: for when Afflictions, Distresses, Tribulation and Persecution are borne, in way of obedience to the holy will of God, and the soul is sweetly complying therewith, as its present duty, both God is glorified, and the Christian soul is edified, as by all other Christian duties; and thus Satan is disappointed. Sure, this can not but yeeld much peace and comfort unto the suffering beleever, under all his hardships and sore pressures.

8. This Consideration, if rightly improved, could not but make the suffering beleever sing and rejoice, with Paul and Silas, while in prison *Act. 16. vers. 25.* and with the Apostles, when shamefully beaten *Act. 1. vers. 40, 41.* Because, they cannot but say, that their hearts are glade and rejoice within them (if they be not under the power of some evil frame) when they are

about known duty ; and that what they do they do with a piece of joy and gladness , when they reflect upon it , as a commanded duty , and remember how therein they are doing the will of their Father , and running His errands : and why should they not be also gladd and rejoice in their sufferings , when they may know , that therein they are also about the will of their Father , and actually evidencing their Loyalty , Faithfulness , Subjection , and Obedience to Him ?

9. This Consideration may also quiet the honest-hearted Believer , when troubled with these or the like thoughts , That now he cannot get God so served as he was wont to do ; He cannot get such a good work begun or perfected , which he had intended for the publik good ; He cannot get the spiritual good of others , Neighbours and Relations , so promoted , as he would desire. From this , I say , the Believer may draw grounds of peace to his own soul , & shut these perturbing thoughts to the door : because the Lord is not now calling for these works at his hands ; but is now calling for another duty , wherein if he carry himself aright , God will be no less glorified , than by all that work , which he Intended : nay , this being the present duty , and piece of work now put in his hand

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by God, the doing thereof aright will more glorifie God: And therefore this should allay all their sorrow and grieve, which they finde upon their disappointments, and cause them sweetly comply with the present duty, and account that best, which He accounteth best.

10. Seing in choosing affliction rather than sin, they are about a commanded duty, and doing the will of God; they have the same ground of hope, that the Lord shall enable them thereunto, and by his grace carry them thorow, that they have, as to other duties; the same Covenant-Grounds, and Covenant-promises reach all duties, and except none; so that this very Consideration may raise the soul in hope, & may encourage the man to goe to Christ by faith, and lean to him for seasonable strength and supplies of grace, for through-bearing in the duty; and through Him, expect to be accepted of the Father, in the discharge of the duty.

CONSIDERATION. X.

Afflictions are all ruled and over-
ruled by a good hand of Pro-
vidence, which is alwayes
in and about them.

MAny a time the Beleever, when swim-
ing thorow a sea of trouble and afflic-
tion, and finding no sensible in-come of
reliefe, or mitigation of the calamity, cry-
eth out with the Church *Eesai. 49. vers. 14.*
— *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God
hath forgotten me:* And as it is *Eesai. 40. v 27.*
My way is hid from the Lord. He hath left
me alone, in this sea of trouble, as for-
getting that I am into this wrestling and
fighting postoure: He hath turned his back
upon me, and seemeth unconcerned with
all that is come upon me, and yet is lying
heavy on me. He considereth neither my
weakness, nor the strength and violence of
the Temptation, under which I am, and
which is like to overwhelm me. Hence
he crieth out with *David Psal. 31. vers. 12.*
I am forgotten, as a dead man out of minde:
And againe *Psal. 42. vers. 9.* *Why hast thou
forgotten me;* It is certaine, such sad com-
plaints

plaints are not altogether justifiable, as they proceed from men, in whom is so much corruption and unbeleef (though in our blessed Lord, while on the cross, such a sentence, as, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* was free of all mud or unbelief) for though they express the ardencie of their desires to have the Lord smiling upon them; yet there is some admixture of dross in them; and they hint, at least, that they apprehend God is at a distance, taking little notice of them, or of their present condition, but withdrawing his helping hand, or delaying to send reliefe, as not caring, how great their Affliction be, or how their Enemies trade them under foot. Hence we see, what corruptions are ready to stirre and work in the beleever, at such a time: And the faith of God's being alwayes present with them, while under the trial, and ordering all things, in the dispensation, with a fatherly care and tenderness, would comfort them, and ease their mind, in the saddest of their distress. It may therefore be of use to speak a little unto this *Consideration*.

In order therefore to the clearing-up of this *Consideration*, for the end intended, we shall.

- I. Show, that the Lord indeed hath an
high

high and holy hand, in all such dispensations, as prove sad and grievous afflictions unto the godly.

2. We shall endeavour to explaine and clear, how and what way the hand of the Lord is in and about these afflictions; only with an eye to our present designe.

3. We shall briefly pointe-out the way how this Consideration should be improv'd, in the time of Affliction and Tribulation.

As to the *first*, That God hath an holy and high over ruling hand in and over the afflictions, and crosses, that his people meet with. This is past all doubt and dispute, as to some of them; such as *poverty*, through God's immediat hand, blating mens labours and endeavours, or taking away their goods by sea, or by fire, or destroying their cattel by death: and *sickness* upon their bodies, or *death of friends and relations*, and the like. In such, every one will grant, that God hath an hand, and every wise Christian will look upon them (as the Centurion, that great Beleever, did, *Mat. 8. vers. 8, 9.*) as God's Servants and Souldiers under his command and Authority, to go and return, as He enjoineth. But as to other afflictions, brought about by the Instruments and Under-agents of Satan, maliciously set to persecute the
 Godly,

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 65

Godly, in their Name, Liberty, Goods, Life, or Conscience, though none of Gods Children, when they are in their right mindes, & at themselves, will deny the Sovereaine over ruling hand of Providence; yet while under Temptation, & wrestling with the calamity, they will be found too ready to think and speak that, which is not very consistent with the lively faith and perswasion of this Sovereaine Truth, we shall therefore in a few words confirme it, from the Scriptures.

1. We findethat the Godly have looked on these sad afflictions, brought about by wicked hands, out of wicked purposes and designes, as coming from God principally; and have eyed God, as having a principal holy hand in the same. The affliction, that *Joseph* met with, was sad, when he was sold by his own Brethren; & though it was they that had sold him, & that out of wickedness and maice; yet he saith *Gen. 45:8.* to them. *It was not you, that sent me hither, but God. He saith the Lord to be the principal disposer of all; & therefore saith Gen. 45 5. — God sent me before you, to preserve life. And againe Gen. 50. vers. 26. But as for you, ye thought evil against me, God meant it unto God, to bring to passe, as it is this day, to save much people alive. It was likewise a great affliction to David, to be scourged with the tra-*
torous

torous tongue of *Shimei*, railing upon him, when he was flying from the face of his Son *Absalom*: and calling him a *Man of blood*, & a *Man of Belial*; and saying to him, *the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned* — And behold thou art taken to thy mischiefe, because thou art a bloody man. 2. Sam. 16: 5, 6, 7, 8. Yet holy David observed an higher hand in all this, and therefore said *Vers. 10. So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David. Who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so? And Vers. 11. againe Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. He taketh up God's hand in the business as principally ordering the matter. So Job when the Sabeans and Chaldeans had robbed him of his goods; said nevertheless Job 1. vers. 21. Naked came I out of my Mothers womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord: He looketh over Instruments, and seeth above them an higher hand over-ruling all, and ordering all, according to His soveraigne will and pleasure. See also Ps. 44. v. 11, 12. and 89: 39.*

2. The Lord himself by his Prophets signifieth so much: and, as it were, looketh upon the deed of these wicked Instruments,

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ments, as His own; because of His principal holy hand therein, ordering all to His own holy ends. Thus he saith by *Amos 3:6.*

—— *Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it. So Esai. 45. vers. 7. I forme light and creat darknes, I make peace and creat evil: I the Lord do all these things.*

Darkness then and evil and sad dispensations are from the Lord Creator: He formeth and maketh these things, according to his own mind. Likewise *Jer. 18:11.* — Thus saith the Lord, behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a devise against you. A remarkable passage we have *2. Sam. 12: vers. 11, 12.* Thus saith the Lord, behold I wil raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives, before thine eyes, and give them unto thy Neighbour; and he shall lie with thy wives, in the sight of this sun: for thou didst this secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And this accordingly was done by that wicked wretch Absalom *2. Sam. 16. vers. 22.* And because of the high, holy and soveraigne hand, which God had in this sore affliction, He saith by *Nathan the Prophet*, that He would do it.

3. We finde in the Scriptures, that the wicked Enemies, in following & prosecuting their malicious designs against the
People

People of God, are held forth, and spoken of, as God's Instruments, in that work: As *Eesai. 10. vers. 5.* Where the *Affyrian* is called *the rod of God's anger*; and *the staff in their hand*, is said to be *His indignation*. So *Vers. 15.* They are compared to an *axe* in the hand of him, that heweth therewith; and to a *saw*, to a *rod* and to a *staff*, all which (we know) can do nothing, but as moved and ordered by the principal Actor. To the same sense, are they compared to a *rasour*, wherewith God will shave the head and the haire of the feet, and the beard *Esa. 7. vers. 20.* Thus is *Babylon* called a *golden cup* in the hand of the Lord *Jer. 51. vers. 7.* Likewise the Enemies are compared to a *net*, which God will spread over his people *Hos. 7. v. 12.* and to a *snare* *Ezek. 12. vers. 13.* They are likewise called *God's sword* *Psal. 17. vers. 13.* and *His hand* *vers. 14.* All which and the like expressions show, That God hath a principal hand, in the afflictions, which his people meet with at the hands of wicked Instruments; and that the wicked are but as so many Instruments and Lixes, imployed by him, for that effect, howbeit they minde no such thing, but drive on their own designes, to satisfie their own wicked lusts.

4. The Scripture speaketh of the Lord,
as

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as raising up these wicked Instruments, as leavying them, and sending them to execute his will. So *Eesai. 5. vers. 26.* And He will lift up an Ensigne to the Nations from far, and will hisse unto them from the end of the earth, and behold they shall come with speed swiftly. So *Ejai. 7. vers. 18.* And it shall come to passe, in that day, that the Lord shall hisse for the flie, that is in the uttermost parts of the rivers of *Egypt*; and for the bee, that is in the Land of *Assyria*. By which we understand, that as these Enemies cannot stir, notwithstanding of all their malice, rage and anger against the Lord's people, till God send for them, and hisse for them, and (as it were) subscribe and seal their commission; so they are wholly at his disposal; as the armie is at the disposal of the General, or of him, who leavyeth them, and employeth them. In like manner, we read *1 Chron. 5. vers. 26.* that the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of *Pul*, King of *Assyria*, against the *Reubenites*, the *Gadites*, and the half tribe of *Manasseh*. So it is said *Psal. 105. vers. 25.* That God turned the heart of the *Egyptians* to hate his people, and to deal subtilly with his servants. And *2 Chron. 21. vers. 16.* that he stirred up against *Jehoram* the spirit of the *Philistines*, and of the *Arabians*, that were neer the *Ethiophians*.

5. We

5. We finde the Lord said frequently to deliver up his people into the hands of these Enemies, and to sell them unto them, & as it were to give them wholly up to their devotion and disposal; see *Judg.* 3: 8. and 4. *vers.* 2. and 6. *vers.* 1. and 10: 7. *Dan.* 1: 2. 2 *King.* 17. *vers.* 20. Thereby showing, that these Enemies could do nothing against the people of God, untill the Lord had permitted the same, and given way thereto, and had (as it were) withdrawn his protection, and taken away his hedge of defence, and so left them naked and exposed unto the rage and cruelty of their brutish Enemies.

6 This is also manifest from the grand and noble Purposes and Designs, which the Lord bringeth about by those meanes, far different from what these wicked Instruments intend; as we see *Gen* 45. and 50 *Joseph's* Brethren meant evil against him; but God meant it for good. So *Eesai.* 10. *vers.* 7. The *Affyrian* meaneth not so, as God doth, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few: but the Lord hath another work upon mount *Zion* and on *Jerusalem* *Vers.* 12. to wit, to punish them, only by his smiting with a rod, and lifting up his staff, after the manner of *Egypt* *V.* 24.
or

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or (as it is *Eesai. 27: 9.*) to purge away the iniquity of Jacob, and to take away sin. Wherefore seeing the Lord hath such sovereign ends, as the chastisement and trial of his people, the exercise of their graces &c. to bring about, He cannot but have a special hand in and about the meanes, which serve to bring about these ends. This being sufficient to cleare up what was *first* to be spoken to, we come

Secondly to speak a little of the manner and way, how the hand of the Lord is to be observed in and about the sharpe afflictions of his people, by the hand of wicked persons, who are active therein. And in speaking to this, we shall wave all subtile debates, concerning God's Decreeing the event of sin, His Predetermination, and His Concourse with second causes, in those Actions, which are sinful; and shall onely pitch upon some particulars, which are more plaine and undeniable, and also more useful to the point in hand. As

I There is the Lord's holy *permission*, giving way to, and not restraining the furie, and rage of Enemies, when He hath a mind to make use of them for a scourge; He must loose, as it were, the chaine, with which they are bound and restrained; and take away the hedge of protection, wherewith
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he guardeth and protecteth his people, and all that belongs to them. Satan could do nothing against *Job*, nor stirre so much as one lambs tail, that belonged to him, untill the Lord, for holy and wise ends, gave way thereunto; therefore he said unto the Lord *Job* 1. vers. 10. *Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side?* This is also imported, in the Lords giving up his people into the hands of Enemies, and selling them and delivering them, as a judge doth a Malefactor into the hand of the Executioner. Yet we must not conceive of this Permission, as if it were in all things like unto the bare & naked permissions of men; but as futable to him, who is a most pure and simple Act.

2. here is herein considerable the Lord's *Commission*, to speak so: not that He will warrant and approve of them, in their wickedness, or give them any moral Authority or Power thereunto: but that in his active providence, He hath such a soveraigne and supream hand, and all these wicked agents do so depend upon Him, as they cannot stir, or move, till he give (as it were) the sigre, and a Providential call and commission; as souldiers can not set upon a Citie, or the Enemy, or give an assault,

assault, or charge untill the General give the word of command. Thus the Lord behoved to say to Saran, ere he could trouble *Job*, *Behold all that he hath is in thy power*: and againe, *Behold he is in thy hand*, *Job* 1. vers. 12. and 2. vers. 6. This is it which *David's* words, concerning *Shimei*, import, when he said, *The Lord hath said unto him, curse David*. The lying Spirit in the mouth of *Ahab's* false Prophets, could not go forth to deceive *Ahab*, that he might fall at *Ramoth Gilead*, till the Lord had said, *Thou shalt perswade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so* 1 *King*. 22: 22.

3. There is the Lord's fitting (as it were) and qualifying them for the work, by so ordering things, in his Holy and Sovereigne Providence, that they are enabled to carry on their purposes, and to do what they are imployed in, and to performe the work, they are set about: *Absalom* could not have been such a crosse and plague to his father, *David*: as to chase him from his Throne and Kingdom, unless he had gotte the power of the Countrey upon his side, and such a numerous army to back him: and whence was this, but from the Lord, in his holy Justice and Sovereignty? *Nebuchadnezzar* could not have been the hammer of the earth, if the Lord, in his holy Providence,

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had

had not given him great power and might for that end. Hence Christ said to *Pilat Joh. 19. vers. 11.* *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.* *Pilat* was boasting of his power and place, and supposed, that he could do what he pleased, and that he had full power over Christ, to crucifie him, or to set him at liberty, as he pleased; but he boasted of that, which he was not Master of; for Christ tels him, whence his power came, and that he had no more, than the Supreme Lord and Governour, the absolute Disposer of all things, was pleased to grant.

4. There is the Lord's ordering and fixing the Beginning of the Trouble, which necessarily followeth upon the foregoing Acts; so as the Enemies, for all their heat and rage, cannot touch one hair of God's Children, nor work them the least trouble, before the time come, that the Lord hath appointed, and that He (as it were) appoint them to beginne, and give the signe. The wicked are as so many rampant and devouring lions, longing earnestly for their prey, but God hath them so chained, and muzzled, that they can neither bark nor bite, till He give way. Early did *Herod* beginne to seek the life of our Lord Jesus, while He

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He was but a childe in the swedling clothes; and oft did his Enemies attempt his hurt, and seek advantage against Him, but all invaine; for his houre was not yet come: Hence it was, that when the Pharisees told him, that Herod was seeking his life, He answered *Luk. 13. vers. 32, 33.* Go tell: *that fox, behold, I cast out Devils, and do cures, to day, and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected: Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem.* Jesus Christ, the angel, that ascended (in vision to Iohn Revel 7. vers. 2, 3.) from the East, having the seal of the living God, cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the Earth and the Sea; saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God: So that there is a restraining power, keeping up from hurting untill the set time come.

5. There is the Lord's determining and specifying the nature and kinde of the Trouble, with which His people must be exercised; and herein His determining and ordering Providence appeareth. The Enemy would be at death, and no less will satisfie them; but He will order it so, that they shall not get their will; & therefore will suffer them to do no more than to cast the man in

prison, or confine him, or fine him, and spoile him of his goods. The Devil would have been at no less, than *Job's* life, when he said *Job* 2. vers. 4. *Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life*: But the Lord would not grant this, but said, *save his life* Vers. 6. And suffered him only to smite him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

6. There is the Lord's careful Providential measuring-out the quantity of the Trouble, like a faithful and painful Physician, who will himself measure the quantity of the physick, he is to prescribe unto his dear Son, or Daughter, and will not commit it unto the Apothecary, who possibly may more consult his own advantage, than the good of the patient. Our Lord weigheth the affliction in his own just balances. Enemies may think to ruine and undo all; but our God, who setteth bounds to the sea, limiteth their rage; and will suffer them to do no more, than He thinketh good. The plowers plow, and make long their furrowes, upon the back of God's People, and many a time they afflict them; yet they prevail not against them; why? the Lord cuts asunder the cords of the wicked, *Psal.* 129: 1, 2, 3, 4.

7. The Lord's hand of Providence appeareth,

peareth, in mixing together the several ingredients, that make up their cup of affliction. Many a time the Lords people have a complicated crosse, as we see in *Job*, *David*, *Heman* and others; and it is the Lord, who weaveth and warpeth these crosses together; Satan and his Instruments are but His drudges, blowing at the furnace; and therefore the Godly fixe their eye mainly upon God; as knowing, that He ordereth all to his own mind, and no one ingredient more can be put into their cup, than He will.

8. The hand of the Lord appeareth, in his suiting the Trouble or Calamity, unto their case and necessity. As a wise Physician considereth the Temper and Constitution of the patient, and taketh special notice of the nature of the disease, and accordingly frameth the Medicine: So the Lord considereth the case of his people, and what humores and corruptions are most predominant in their souls: and accordingly ordereth and prepareth such medicinal afflictions, as are fittest to purge-out these peccant humores: and hence there is a necessity for such sharpe Medicines, as the Lord maketh use of, *1 Pet. 1. vers. 6 Wherein we greatly reioice, though now for a season. (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through manifold*

Sold temptations. Heaviness, or Sadness, through temptations, and manifold temptations, was necessary to their condition, The Lord saw, that their case called for it, otherwayes he had not exercised them thus.

9. So the hand of the Lord is manifest, in making the affliction answerable to their strength. A potion may be fit for and suitable to the disease, yet may be too strong for the weak patient, and more readily kill, than cure: therefore a wise and tender Physician will take good notice of the patients present strength. So the Lord, who is tender of His peoples welfare, will proportion the Physick of affliction unto their strength. Hence we hear it said, 1 Cor. 10. vers. 13. ——— But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, above that you are able. Accordingly Jeremiah prayeth Chap. 10. v. 24. O Lord correct me, but with judgement, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing. The Lord's way is to correct his people in meature, Jer 30. vers. 11. and 46. vers. 28. And as a father pitieth them, that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth we are dust, Psa'. 103. vers. 13, 14. He knoweth that their strength is not the strength of stones, nor are their bones of brass; and so he knoweth they are not able to bear

bear many blowes. Thus we see, the Lord measures the affliction to their strength: It is true, *Paul* saith *2 Cor. 1. vers. 8.* That he and his companions were pressed out of measure, and above strength: which would seem to contradict what is said; But this seeming contradiction will be taken away, by what we shall next adde.

10. When the affliction and distress is such, as would undo, and presse the poor Beleever out of measure, if he got not some new supply of strength to stand under that burden; the Lord's hand appeareth, in fitting the Beleever for the stroke, and in enabling him to bear it, so that he is not killed thereby, nor overwhelmed therewith; by giving cordials, he fortifieth the man against the violence of Temptations, which otherwise would prevail against him: *Paul* and his Company *2 Cor. 1. vers. 8, 9.* were pressed with trouble in *Asia*, out of measure, above strength, so much that they despaired even of life, yea and had the sentence of death in themselves; such a storme was it, that they could not ride it out, if fresh supplies of strength and courage had not been granted by God, who raiseth the dead, unto them: and if the Lord had not thus delivered them from so great a death, they had perished; but how

was this done? See *Vers. 4, 5.* The God of all comfort comforted them, in all their tribulations; and as the sufferings of Christ abounded in them, so their consolation also abounded by Christ: And thus the Lord fitted them for the stroke, when the stroke was too sore for them. So this same Apostle, when assaulted with a messenger of Satan, that buffeted him *2 Cor. 12. vers. 7.* Was strengthened by the grace of God, *Vers. 9.* to stand out against that temptation, which otherwise had overcome him, as his praying thrice, that it might depart from him *Vers. 8.* would import. Thus the Lord keepeth the head of his poor people above water, by making his power to rest upon them, and by making perfect his strength in their weakness, *Vers. 9.* Thus also are they strong, when weak *Vers. 10.*

II. The Lord's good hand of Providence appeareth in this matter, in disappointing the Enemies of their malicious designs; They are busie plotting and contriving the ruine and destruction of His people; but the more they seek to destroy them, the more they grow and thrive, the more they multiply, and the stronger they become. It is almost incredible, what multitudes of Christians, through the whole Empire, the bloody persecuting Emperours destroyed
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and put to death, in the primitive times; but the more they were massacred, the more they grew; the blood of the saints and martyres, was the seed of the Church. *Daniel's* adversaries thought to have got him destroyed; but their enmity and rage against him tended to his further exaltation and establishment. So was it with *David*, the more that *Saul* did persecute him, the more his bow abode in strength.

12. The Lord's hand mightily appeareth in the afflictions of his people, in that He powerfully and Infallibly carrieth on, and bringeth to passe His own Purposes and Designs, countermining and counter working the designs and wicked projects of the Enemies; yea, in effectuating His own ends, even by what the Enemies are doing purposely to carry on their Ends. When the Enemies are blowing with all their might, to make the furnace burn hot, that the mettall, as they suppose and intend, may be wholly consumed; the Lord by that same meanes is infallibly bringing about His Ends, and accomplishing His designs; *to wit*, to purge the mettall, and take away the drosse. By what the *Assyrian* was doing, in prosecution of his Ends, *to wit*, to destroy and cut off nations not a few *Eesai. 10. vers. 7.* The Lord was performing his whole
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work

work upon mount Zion and Jerusalem, Vers. 12. and what was this, but to purge away iniquity, and to take away sin, Esai. 27. vers. 9? to chasten and punish for correction and amendment Jer. 30: 11. and 46: 28.

13. Herein also appeareth the Lord's over-ruling hand, that while possibly the trouble is in its greatest strength, and Enemies are swelling in their pride, and thinking their contrivances cannot fail, their plots and designs are laid so deep and so sure, that they cannot misgive; even then the Lord will, make a door of outgate appear unto his people, and give some foreruning tokens of the dawning of a fair day; even then, He will make a way for an escape, that they may be able to bear it 1 Cor. 10. vers. 13.

14. Lastly, His hand appeareth herein, that in due time, He putteth a period to the trial and trouble, by delivering his people out of them all Psal. 34. vers. 7, 17, 19. He will not suffer the rod of the wicked to rest alwayes on the back of the righteous Psal. 125. vers. 3. He will not contend for ever, lest the spirits should fail before him, and the souls, which he hath made Esai. 57. vers. 16. He will keep His people no longer under Physick, than He seeth necessary; and therefore it is but for a season, that his people are in heaviness.

vineſs. 1 *Pet.* 1. *verſ.* 6. Enemies think to keep the people of God at under for ever; but the Lord's ſupream over-ruling hand appeareth here, that He hath limited the duration of the trial and trouble to *Ten dayes Revel.* 2. *verſ.* 10. He hath limited the rage of Enemies to *an hour, a day, a moneth and a year Revel.* 9. *verſ.* 15. And the treading of the holy city under foot to 42. moneths *Revel.* 11: 2. And when the Lord's time cometh, all the power and malice of the Enemies will not be able to hinder the delivery; and how little ſo ever His own people look for it, yet He will work it: ſo that though there be ſcarce faith upon the Earth, yet He will come, and perfect what He hath intended.

We come now to ſpeak a little to the 3. particular, *to wit,* To ſhew how this **C**onſideration may and ought to be improved to advantage, in a time of affliction. And

1. The faith and right thoughts of this Truth, That the Lord ruleth and over-ruleth all that the wicked are deviſing and executing, according to their own luſt and rage, to afflict, perſecute and deſtroy His people, according to His own mind, would yeeld comfort and encouragement unto His people, be their trouble what it would. In a time of Trouble, there are ſeveral thoughts,

that come in the minde of H s people, which occasion Discouragment and Sorrow ; all which this *Consideration* of God's over-ruling hand , if rightly improven, would either prevent , or keep them from the hurt of ; so that notwithstanding of these , they were in case to rejoyce , and to sing , as

(1.) When they think upon the Instruments of their calamitie , they are ready to pore too much on them , and to look upon them , as if there were none above them , to marshal and order them , to command and over-rule them ; as people are terrified by souldiers , that are under no Command or Discipline , and expect no pity , or favour from them. But the faith of God's being above their heads , to over-see and over-awe them , would free the Child of God from this discouragment. He would not be so cast down and affrighted , if he beleev'd , that God hath all these wicked Instruments , more under his command , than the best disciplin'd souldiers are under the Command of the most strick and awfull General , that ever was. These Instruments cannot move a finger without God. Souldiers , when out of the sight of their Commanders , may do much mischief ; and their Commanders cannot hinder it , because they know not of it : But neither Devils ,

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Devils, nor the most wicked of his Instruments, can move one haire of God's people, till the Lord give way, and permit it to be done, He must first loose the raignes, or they cannot move a foot. becau'e they are chained hand & foot, in the chaines of his Providence; yea their very tongue is chained, that they cannot so much, as curse or reproach any of His people, untill the Lord loose their tongues, and say, (as it were) go curse and raile upon such an one.

(2.) When they observe the Confusion, Irregularity, Brutishness and Unreasonableness of these Enemies, in their way and actions; they are ready to think, that God hath forsaken the earth, and is unconcerned with what these wretches were doing; and upon this they cannot but be much fainted and discouraged. But the faith of this, that God is working hitherto *Joh. 5. vers. 17.* and that these wicked Instruments of their calamity were under his eye, would free them of this misapprehension. Nay, they would beleeve, and by faith see, a divine Order and Regularity, in the midst of the greatest Confusions, & brutish Madacres, that ever were; if they beleeved that God had a principal hand in all these Actions, Moving, Ruling, Ordering

dering and Over-ruling all, according to His own mind.

(3.) The consideration of the Activity, Diligence, Malice, Restlessness and Malicious wickedness of the Enemies, troubleth them, and maketh them fear, that ere ever they be aware, they shall be swallowed up. But this discouragment would evanish, if they remembered and beleaved, that the timing of their affliction is not in the hand of their Enemies. They cannot stirre, till their commission be (as it were) subscribed; and the houre and minute appointed come, when they must beginne; He, who is Supreame, determineth the season, and the time; and over-ruleth all so, that were the hunger and desire of these ravenous wolves never so great, they cannot attempt any distruction, till the minute appointed come.

(4.) When they consider the exceeding great Rage and Cruelty of their Enemies, they are ready to think, that sure, they will make havock of all, they will destroy utterly, and make an end of all. But how terrible so ever this thought be, yet its terrour is weakened, when the beleever calleth this to minde, That it will not be as these enraged and merciless Beasts intend; but as God will, who is the Sovereigne

raigne Disposer of all, and Supream Master of work; they are but under-Agents, and the Instrument in His hand: They are no Master of themselves, in this matter; but as the ax and saw, in the hand of the workman, that cannot cut, but as he ordereth it: The child will not be afraid of a sword, or of an ax, when he seeth it is in the hand of his father. Their threatnings are not much to be regarded; They have said, *come and let us out them off from being a nation, that the Name of Israel may be no more in remembrance* as it is *Psal. 83. vers. 4.* But they have not yet gotten it done. They intend Destruction; and therefore breath-forth nothing but cruelty; but God, who is above them, intendeth but Correction, and some Chastisement, and will suffer them to do no more, than may contribute to that end.

(5.) The thoughts of the strength and liveliness of the Enemies create also terrour and fear; they see their power decayeth not, but groweth rather, and their number increaseth, and thence they art ready to inferre, There shall be no outgate: But a sight of God, as neer (as *David* prayeth, when he took such a look of his Enemies, *Psal. 38. vers. 19, 21.* saying *But mine Enemies are lively, they are strong, and they that hate*

hate me wrongfully are multiplied —
For sake me not, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me) would help in this case; the Believer would not be much cast down for all this; for he would be in case to say, They must be kept up, so long as God hath work for them. as a man will keep his ax and his saw sharpe and clear, so long as he mindeth to make use of them: but all their strength saith not, that there shall be no out-*rage*; when the Lord hath finished his work in *Zim* he will punish the fruite of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks: And the Lord of hosts will send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory, he shall kindle a burning. like the burning of a fire *Eesai. 10. vers. 12, 16.* And for as strong as they are, the Lord can raise up a scourge against them; as *Eesai. 10: 26.* yea and make the light of Israel for a fire, and his holy one for a flame, and it shall burne and devoure their thornes, and their briers, in one day, and shall consume the glory of their forest, and fruitful field &c. as *Eesai. 10. vers. 17, 18*

(6.) But even this proveth sometimes fainting and discouraging unto his people, That it is not man, that they have to do with, but with God principally, whoever be the Instruments; and that upon several accounts;

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accounts; as because He is a God of Might, of Power, and of Terrour; and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God; and withall He is just, and they are conscious to themselves of much guilt. But yet, notwithstanding of this, the thoughts of Gods having a principal hand in all these afflictions, may keep from fainting, because (1) He is not intending their destruction, as Enemies do; but their Good, their Amendement, their Repentance, and Returning unto the Lord &c. (2) He measureth not out their affliction, according to his strength and almighty Power, else He should soon crush them, and bring them to nothing. *Will He plead against me* (said Job Chap. 23. vers. 6.) *with his great power?* No, but *He will put strength in me.* (3.) Nor according to strick Justice, and pure Wrath. *In plenty of justice, He will not afflict*; as the words of Elihu Job 37. vers. 23. may be read. *He will not stir up all his wrath,* Psal. 78. vers. 38. (4.) Nor according to their deservings; for that word of Zophar holdeth true Job 11. vers. 6. *God exacteth of thee, less than thine iniquity deserveth.* And Psal. 103. vers. 10. *He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.* (5.) Nor doth the Lord deal with them, as Enemies; the difference is

is great betwixt his dealing with the one and with the other *Eesai. 17. vers. 7.* Hath He smitten him, as He smote those that smote him? is he slaine according to the slaughter of them, that are slain by him? But on the contrary, He dealeth with them, according to a rule of Mercy, and fatherly Compassion; for as a Father pitieth his Children, and only chasteneth them; so doth the Lord deal with them. He knoweth what they can bear, and layeth no more upon them, than they are able to bear. The wise Prophet tels us *Prov. 12. vers. 10.* That the righteous man regairdeth the life of his beast, and therefore will not overcharge him with a load, heavier than he can bear: And will not the righteous Lord regaird the life of his own servants? Are they not of much more value, than many beasts? Sure then, He will not overcharge them. *1. Cor. 10. vers. 13*

2. The beleeving and right consideration of this Truth, That God over-ruleth and disposeth of, and ordereth afflictions, as He seeth good, would much help unto the life of *Patience*, which is so commendable *1am. 5. vers. 11.* Being a piece of the honour and badge of Saints *Revel. 13: 10.* and *14. vers. 12.* and so much taken notice of by God *Revel. 2. vers. 2, 19.* Yea and profit

profitable, having its perfect work *Lam. 1. vers. 4.* and bringing happiness with it *Lam. 5 : 11.* This Consideration (I say) rightly Improven, may help hereunto; for it will fortifie the soul of the Beleever against those thoughts, which usually occasion impatience. as

(1.) When the man is poreing upon the uncouthness of the Affliction, wherewith he is exercised, and saying with the Church *Lam. 1. vers. 12.* *Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger,* he is ready to give way unto impatience. But when he considereth, who hath prepared this potion for him; that it was no unskilful Apothecary, it was not the malignant Enemy, that intended his death and destruction; but the only Wise and Supream God, who was seeking his good, his life and health, and who knew, that no other potion would suite his distemper, and purge out his peccant humores; this will help him to lye under the workings of that physick with patience; Though the potion of physick be bitter, and work something hard, yet a wise man will have patience, when he considereth, that the Physician, who did appoint it, was both well skilled, and his special friend; and therefore perswadeth himself

himself, that no less would do him good: So when the beleever considereth, that it is His God and Father, who hath prepared that potion for him, and that He saw his distemper called for it, and when he considereth that God with his own hands did make and prepare it, weighed all the doses, with great carefulness, and mixed in nothing but what was most necessary, he will drink it though bitter, with the better will: and albeit it work hard, and make him sick; yet he will not be impatient, and cry out, why am I so and so handled? doth every one get such paining & sickning physick, as this? but rather say, because every one needeth not such strong physick, I must be dealt with in a special manner; I have other corruptions, than ordinary, and therefore must have patience, and be content to be otherwise dealt with, than others usually are.

(2.) The person in affliction, when he seeth, himself compassed about with evils, and that he is not visited with one or two rodes, but with many at once; and that innumerable evils compass him about (as said David Psal. 40. vers. 12. which in part occasioned his adding, *therefore my heart faileth me, or forsaketh me.*) then he is ready to say, how can I, while thus invironed with evils, have

have patience? But if he would call to mind God's hand in the matter, as *Job* did, he would, with him, bless the name of the Lord; for then he would see, that God himself had ordered all, and that not one of all these multifarious evils came, without the Lord's special and active Permission, and Providential Ordination, Appointment and Commission: and that God alone had ordered that mixture, and combination of troubles and trials.

(3.) The impatience of Gods people is oft occasioned by their imagining, that the trouble is greater, than they can bear: as we see in *Job Chap 6. vers. 11, 12. What is my strength, that I should hope! And what is mine end, that I should prolong my dayes? Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh of brasse. And againe Chap. 7 vers. 11, 12. Therefore I will not refraine my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?* But would they consider and beleieve, that God knoweth what they are able to bear, and is proportioning the load to their strength, which He knoweth, better than they do: or when He seeth it fit to presse them above measure, that they may despaire in themselves, and not trust in them-
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selves, that then He underproppeth and supporteth the weak back, and conveyeth in secret strength, enabling them to stand, under the load; and thus never layeth more on, than they are able to bear: If (I say) they were calling this to mind, they would see no cause of Impatience; but rather cause of crying out, when we are weak, then are we strong, and therefore we will glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us 2 Cor. 12. vers. 9, 10. And they would through faith, be in case to say, with Pau' 2 Cor. 4. vers. 8. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

(4.) Their Impatience is likewise occasioned by considering, that their Trouble and Affliction is still growing, when they supposed, that it should have decreased. But the right Improvement of this Truth would frame the Soul for patience, notwithstanding hereof: because the beleever would see ground to say, grow as it will, the hand of the Lord is about it; it will grow to no greater height, than he seeth good: let Enemies blow at the fire, as fast and with as great earnestness, as they will, the furnace shall be no hotter, than the Supream Master and Over-ruler of all,
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seeth fit, for the ends He intenderh: He knoweth the nature of the mettall, and how hote a fire will serve the turn to purge it.

(5.) This also raiseth impatient thoughts in their heart, That they can see no appearance of an outgate; all doores are so shut, that no hope appeareth: thus was it with Job; & therefore hath he many such expressions: as Chap. 7. vers. 6. *My daies are swifter than a weavers shuttle, and are spent without hope. Vers. 7. — Mine eye shall no more see good. Vers. 8. The eye of him, that hath seen me, shall see me no more.* But this Impatience would evanish, if this were beleev- ed, That the Lord's hand were in and about the affliction, making a faire way to a saile escape, and at length, in his own due time, putting a period to the Trouble: when his work is finished, & the end He designed attained: and if it were firm'y beleev- ed, that, let Enemies make all as sure, as they can, and rage as they will, they shall not be able to keep them longer under their yron harrowes, than He seeth good, no not one day, nor an houre.

3. The right improvement of this Con- sideration would help unto an holy and sweet Submission, and cause us say with David Psal. 39. vers 9. *I was dumb, not open- ing*

ing my mouth , because thou didst it. When Aaron met with a sad dispensation , two of his prime sones, *Nadab and Abihu*, were taken away in the flour of their age , and that in a very terrible manner , by fire from heaven, for their rashness , and when Moses told him *Levit. 10. vers. 3. That this was it , which the Lord spoke , saying, I will be sanctified of all them that come neer me*, it is said of him, *And Aaron held his peace*. A sight of the hand of God , though in a terrible manner , in that dispensation , made him lay his hand upon his mouth , and sit silent in the dust ; He had not one word to say. So that a sight of the hand of God , in the dispensation , ordering all things in it, would help them unto a Christian , yea unto a cheerful Submission: It would not be *patience by force* ; but an hearty , willing , cheerful choosing, bearing and embracing of that lot, because bound on their back by the hand of God. Shall we not drink (would they say) this potion with delight , that God hath prepared , and carefully made up for us ? He knoweth what is best for us ; Shall we not willingly lye under the crosse, that God hath tyed upon us, when He knoweth what He is doing , and what we must not want , and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able ? When His good time is come, there

there will be an end, and all the power of Enemies shall not obstruct our Delivery. The Church Micah. 7. vers. 9. could sweetly sit down, and bear the indignation of the Lord, when by faith she could say, *Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness, V. 8, 9.*

4. The beleiving improvment of this would keep the beleever from fainting, and sincking through discouragment: many thoughts come into the minde, while affliction is lying on their loines, and Satan can suggest many things, at that time, to cause the poor man succumb, while under the load: but the faith of God's Sovereigne and Absolute Ordering of all things, in and about the Trouble, according to his own mind, would keep up their head, and preserve them from a sinful and shameful fainting. They look too much to instruments, and pore too much upon their Nature, Disposition, Activity, Power, Wisdom, Wick- edness, Maliciousness, Rage, Cruelty, and Indefatigableness; and forget that they are but under agents, and can do nothing, but as the Supream God Willeth, Order- t he, Disposeth, and Permitteth; and that He alone Over-ruleth all, Moderateth
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and Ordereth all, according to His own mind, and for His own holy ends, So that they cannot do any thing, whether as to the Substance, or as to the Circumstances of the affliction, but as He, who is the Supreme Master of work, is pleased to suffer and give way unto.

5. The beleeving thoughts of this Truth would keep the Soul from that dreadful sin of Murmuring against the Lord, upon occasion of any Trouble or Distress, he meeteth with. It is the Lord, would the Soul say, and who am I, that I should quarrel with Him. He is ordering, disposing and moderating all, that under agents and lixes are doing, so that all things are done, as He will; and shall I yet be displeased and quarrellsome? Enemies cannot get their will, They are over-ruled, in all their Consultations, Projects, Contrivances, bloody Resolutions, and cruel Executions; matters go not, as they will, but as He will, who is over them; and why then should I murmur, and repine against Him?

6. This would also airth the Eyes of the soul towards the right object, in a day of Trouble. They would not with Heathens, look to chance or fortune, as ruling and ordering all; nor would they with the carnal

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nal multitude fix their eye upon the instruments, and run with the dog to the stone, that is cast at him: but would see another more noble object of their sight, *to wit*, the Principal Agent, Mover, and Orderer of all, in whose hand the wicked are, as the ax and saw in the hand of the workman, and as the rod in the hand of the father; and this sight would help unto a Spiritual Christian frame of Godly fear & Subjection of Soul, and would put the soul in case, to observe the Wisdom, Sovereignty, and absolute Dominion of God, doing what He will, frustrating the tokens of the liars, and dis-appointing the craftie devices of wicked men; as also this sight would munde the man of Christian duties, of searching his wayes, repenting of his finnes, and turning againe to the Lord; for he would see, it was the Lord, with whom he had to do. He would look for his Outgate and Salvation from God alone; so that his Faith, his Hope and his Confidence would be in the Lord alone. His eye being fixed on this object, he would not see cause of troubling himself much about Enemies, or how he might procure their favour; and so would be kepted from Temptations to any sinful compliance or accommodation: So would he be preserved from temptations to the

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using of unlawful meanes for an outgate. Thus we see, how advantagious this eyeing of the Lord, in the day of Trouble, is unto the afflicted; and the faith and improvement of this Consideration cannot but airth the soules eye unto this object. .

7. The right improving of this Truth would free the beleever from many carnal, disquieting, distracting and perplexing feares: He is ready to say; oh I cannot ride out this storme, I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul, the next blast of temptation shall blow me over, I cannot but at length faint and succumb, and the Enemy shall have matter of joy, and all Gods people shall be made to mourn: for were it beleevd, that God Ordered, Disposed, and Over-ruled all, the beleever would see no ground for these feares; for he would see, that no blast could blow, but as He would; no storme could come sooner, than He thought good; nor continue longer, than He saw convenient; nor be more violent and strong, let Enemies threaten and rage as they pleased, than He saw good: He would see the hand of God measuring out all, so as he needed not fear to be overcharged; or if the trouble were indeed greater, than he could well stand under,
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he might see the Lord sitting him by secret strength for it.

8. *Finally* the faith of this, and the right improvement of it would preserve the soul from a dead and senseless stupidity under the rod, or stoical frame, as unconcerned with what befalleth them, which hath no affinity with, but is utterly repugnant to, a Christian frame, and to Christian valour, and undaunted courage: This looketh liker to the frame of an Atheist, than of a Child of God, who trembleth and feareth; when he seeth the rod in his Fathers hand, and dar not despise the chastening of the Lord. Now a sight of God's hand in all, Ordering, Timeing and Seasoning, Mixing and Compounding, Limiting and Bounding, Qualifying and Restricking, Terminating and Ending, Directing and Over-ruling, would perserve the soul from a dead Temper, and cause him mark and observe the footsteps of Royal Sovereignty, Majesty, Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Care and Tenderneſs.

CONSIDERATION. XI.

Christ himself had a suffering life.

WHEN the Leaders and Commanders of an Army, are to bring the Infantrie thorow some deep water, they use to alight off their horses, and walk on foot, that they may take a share of the same lot with the souldiers, that thereby they may the more encourage them to wade with cheerfulness thorow the water: and it proveth indeed some matter of Encouragement to souldiers to follow their Leaders, be the way never so uneasy. Our Lord Jesus, in like manner, who is called the Captaine of our Salvation *Hebr. 2. vers. 10.* knowing that his followers had both fire and water to go thorow *Eesai 43. vers. 2.* the more to encourage them, to endure that hard lot, would come down off his Throne of Majestie and State, and take a share of the lot himself; yea and go before them to break the ice. Therefore it cannot but be most advantagious for the souldiers of Christ, who have a mind to run the race, that is set before them,

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them, to be looking, in the time of their affliction, upon this Captain, according to the advice, which the Apostle giveth unto the afflicted and persecuted Hebrews Chap. 12. vers. 2. *Looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of faith, who for the joy, that was set before Him, endured the cross, and despised the shame.* 3. Consider Him, that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; lest ye be wearied and faine in your mindes. For this same end and purpose do we finde the Apostle Peter proposing this example, for the encouragement of a number of poor scattered and afflicted saints 1 Petr. 2. vers. 21. *For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.* And againe, Chap. 3. vers. 17, 18. *For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing: for Christ also hath once suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.*

It will then be of no small advantage, to afflicted persons, to have this Copie and Example laid before them, if He would help us to speak unto it, in any measure to edification. It will not be necessary, to speak of this subject of Christ's Sufferings, in the full latitude; but it will be sufficient to speak of them, only in reference to the

end proposed; as an Encouraging Example; and in order to this, we shall only do these Two things. 1. We shall mention and propose some particulars, considerable in the sufferings of Christ, which may be suitable matter for the thoughts of a Child of God, in affliction, to dwell upon: 2. Speak some things to the advantagious improvement of the same, in a day of Trouble.

As to the *first*, we shall onely mention these particulars considerable.

1. The Person, who was put to all these Sufferings, was no ordinary person: we think more of the sufferings of a Noble-man Prince, King or great Potentate, than of the Sufferings of a mean, poor man. What shall we then think of the Sufferings of Christ, who was higher than the Princes of the earth, who was King of Kings and Lord of Lords? He was *in the form of God*, having the same Essential Divine form with the Father, He *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, having the same Divine Nature and Properties. Phil. 2. vers. 6. And yet for all this, He *made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the forme of a servant.* —

And being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross vers. 7, 8. Even He, who was the Ancient of dayes, who was set up
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from everlasting, from the beginning, ere ever the earth was Prov. 8. vers. 23. Even He was put to end his dayes in paine and sorrow, He, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting Mica. 5: 2. Who was the Creator of the ends of the earth, who was with God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made, that was made. Job. 1. vers. 1, 2, 3. Even He it was, who was put to all this suffering. What a wonder is this, That the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, the mighty God, as He is called Esai. 9. vers. 6. should become a man of sorrowes, and acquainted with griefe Esai. 53: 3. That the High and holy one, who inhabiteth eternity, and whose perfections and vertues are past finding out, should be found in the fashion of a suffering Man. That God should be thus manifest in the flesh 1 Tim 3. vers. 16? This is a subject worthy of our thoughts, That He, who was God equal with the Father in power and glory, having the fulness of the God head dwelling in him bodily, Col. 2. vers. 9. should condescend so low, as to take on Him mans Nature, and suffer therein. It is true, the Divine Nature could not suffer: but his Humane Nature being personally united unto the Divine Nature, the Person was one; and so He, who was and is God over all,

blessed for ever, did suffer, while his humane Nature was put to suffer.

2. Consider by whom He was put to suffer, even by all ranks of Persons, both high and low, by rich and poor, by noble and ignoble, by Church-men and States-men, and by souldiers, by judges higher and lower, and by lixes, by Jewes and Romans. Some of whom were Malicious, Invective, Cruel, Merciless and Irreconcilable Enemies; such as the Priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees, who were ring-leaders; and did all out of pure malice and wickedness of heart, committing thereby that unpardonable sin, *Mat. 12. v. 31, 32.* These drove forward their cruel designe, and forced Pilat, in a manner, to condemne Him, though he found no fault in Him; and urged a late law of their own thereunto, saying *Job. 19. vers. 7. We have a law, and by our law he must die, because he made himself the Son of God;* a strange law, by which they had bound themselves to condemne and pursue unto death the Messiah, whom they pretended to be waiting for, when ever he came; for the true Messiah was to be Immanuel: and when this was not like to work, their malice carrieth them further *Vers. 12. saying If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsars friend; for whosoever maketh himself*

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himself a King, speaketh against Caesar. Others of those his Persecuters were led on against Him, in their ignorance and blind Zeal, for Christ himself prayeth for them, saying Luk. 23: 34. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. And Peter saith Act. 3: 17. And now, Brethren, I rot, that through ignorance you did it, as did also your Rulers.

3. Consider the duration of his Troubles, they lasted not for a short time, for a few Dayes, or Moneths; but during this whole Life: For His whole Life was nothing but a Life of Suffering: no sooner came He into the world, but Herod sought his Life. He was forced to flee into *Aegypt*, being but a childe in the cradle. He was a Man of sorrowes, and acquainted with griefe *Eesai. 53: vers. 3.* from the Cradle to the Grave, His Life was interwoven with sufferings of one kind and another; and especially after He entered into the publick exercise of His Offices, and was Baptized, He is not well out of one trouble, while He meeteth with another; How oft is He put to flee, and hide himself for his Life? How oft is He maligned, tempted, slandered, persecuted, called a Devil, hated and hunted, until He is at length condemned and killed?

4. Consider what it was that He suffered: It was not one kinde of Trouble and Affliction,

ction, that He was exercised with; but in a manner all sorts came upon Him, He was a Man of Sorrowes and acquainted with griefe, He was oppressed and afflicted *Esai. 53: 3, 7.* He was despised and rejected of men *Esai. 53: 3.* He hid not his face from shame and spitting, but gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them, that plucked off the hair *Esai. 50: v. 6.* *Matth. 26: 67.* and *27: 26.* He was exercised with Hunger, Thirst, Weariness, Poverty, and the like. He was apprehended as a Thiefe or a Robber, Imprisoned, falsely Accused, Condemned, & scourged, and Crucified. He was mocked and reproached, by Words and Deeds, when they put a Crown of Thorns on His Head, clothed Him with a Rob, and put a Reed in His Hand, and bowed the knee before Him, saying, *Hail, King of the Jewes.*

5. Consider what, beside all this that He suffered in His Body and Name, He suffered in Soul, when He was in the Garden *Matth. 26: 37, 38.* Where He began to be sorrowful even unto Death: Yea so sad and heavy was He, that He cried out *Vers. 39* *O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup passe from me: And this He cried thrice over,* which sheweth the vehemency of that pressure, under which He lay, at that time, when He was beginning to wrestle that bloody combat

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combat with the Wrath of God, and to drink that galled Cup, wherein was the Law-curse, because of Sin. And all this was from the *Hand of His Father*; for it was *He, who bruised Him, and put Him to griefe Esai. 53: vers 10.* And it was *He, who hid His face from Him*; so that *He cried out, while on the Cross, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And that when He was presently to give up the Ghost *Mat. 27: v. 46, 50.*

6. Consider how little outward Comfort of Friends or Relations He found, all this time: While He was sweating drops of Bloud, through the vehemencie of the bitter agonie, He was into, while in the Garden, He could not prevail with His Disciples to watch with Him, but one houre. And when He was apprehended by the treacherie of His own Disciple, who ate of His Bread, by *Judas the Traitor*, all His other Disciples forsook Him; Courageous *Peter* denied Him thrice, not without Oaths and Execrations; His loving and beloved Disciple *John* stood a far off; bleeding and sorrowful-hearted, *Mary*, His Mother, durst not come neer to Him: When the Shepherd was smitten, the Flock was scattered.

7. Consider how innocent He was,
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He had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in His mouth *Esaï. 53: 9.* Though He was just, yet was He put to suffer *1 Pet. 3: v 18.* and *2: 22.* We know what false accusations were brought-in against Him; But by all their false witnesses, they could not get Him convict of sin: The Causes wherefore (as to men) He was judged and condemned were Glorious and Fundamental Truthes, such as His affirming that He was the Son of God, and that He was a King, though His Kingdom was not of this World, and therefore was not inconsistent with *Cæsars Kingdom Luk. 22: 70, 71. Job. 18 36, 37.*

8. Yea not only had He done no wrong, but He was come about the most necessary and useful Business of the World, to wit, to save sinners. He was come to bear witness to the truth, and to lay down His Life for His People; He was come to save them from Sin and Destruction, by bearing the Wrath and Curse of God, that was due to sinners, in their stead, as being their Cautioner, and substitute by the Father, in their Room and Place. He was *Jesus*, the Saviour of His People: The Horn of Salvation for us, in the House of David, that we should be saved from our Enemies, and from the hand of all, that hate us, as *Zacharias*

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charias sung Luk. 1: vers. 68, 69, 71, &c. And yet notwithstanding that this was his errand, this was the welcome He got. He came unto His own, but they received Him not: He came to save them, from all their Enemies; and they dealt with Him, as with the Worst of Enemies; and were never at peace, until they had gotten Him crucified and buried.

9. Consider what a Death He was put to: It was not a simple Death, but a multiplied one: For being Crucified, He had (1.) a Painful Tormenting Death, a long lingering and painful Death, yea five Deaths at once, every nail bringing Death with it. (2.) He had a shameful Death, while thus Crucified, as a chiefe Malefactor, and hung-up betwixt two Theeves. (3.) He had a cursed Death; for the Law said, cursed is every one, that hangeth on a tree *Gal. 3: vers. 13. Deut. 21: 23.*

10. Consider for whose sakes all this suffering of His was: It was for the unjust *1 Pet. 3: vers. 18.* He bare our griefs, and carried our sorrowes; He was wounded for our Transgressions, the chastisement of our Peace was upon Him. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all, for the transgression of his People was He smitten *Esa. 53: vers. 4, 5, 6, 8.* It was for Enemies that
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Christ, died for sinners, and for the ungodly Rom. 5: 6, 8, 10.

21. Consider likewise how patiently He endured all this, *When He was reviled, He reviled not againe* 1 Pet. 2: vers. 23. He was brought, as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth: Yea though He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth Esai. 53: 7. When He was accused of the chiefe Priest and Elders, he answered nothing Matth. 27: vers. 12. Yea, when Pilat said unto Him, hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? He answered him to never a word, in so much that the Governour marvelled greatly vers. 13. When one of the Officers stroke Him with the Palme of His Hand, He only answered thus; *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?* Joh. 18: 22, 23. We have heard of the Patience of Job, but withall also of much of his Impatience: But never was such Patience seen in any, as in Christ; never was there an Impatient Word heard out of His Mouth, even when the base Souldiers were reviling Him, spitting in His face, putting a Crown of Thornes on His Head, and a fools coat upon Him, and

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and when scourging Him, buffetting Him,
Hoodwinking Him, and Mocking Him:
Yea when they were doing the worst they
could devise against Him; He said, *Father
forgive them, for they know not what they are
doing.*

12. Consider how willingly and chear-
fully He did undergo all, When He
knew, that the Priests Emissaries were
coming with the Traitour to apprehend
Him, He would not go out of the way;
nor suffer His Disciples to rescue Him;
yea He would not pray to His Father for
Angels help: *Thinkest thou* (said he to
Peter Matth. 26: 53.) *that I cannot now pray
to My Father, and he shall presently give me
more, than Twelve Legions of Angels.*
Vers. 54. *But how then shall the Scriptures be
fulfilled, that thus it must be.* Nay all the
Roman Souldiery could not have taken
His Life, if He had not been willing.
Job. 10: vers. 17, 18. *Therefore doth my Fa-
ther love me, because I lay down my Life, that
I might take it againe. No man taketh it from
me, but I lay it down of my self. I have power
to lay it down, and I have power to take it
again: This Commandement have I receiv-
ed of my Father.* He had a Baptisme to
be Baptized with, and how was He strait-
ned,

ned, or pained, till it was accomplished: *Luk. 12: v. 50.* How offended was He at *Peter*, when he would have dissuaded Him from suffering, saying to Him, *Get thee behinde me, Satan Matth. 16: v. 23.* When He knew, the time was approaching, it is said, *He steadfastly set His face to go toward Jerusalem Luk. 9: 51.*

As to the *Second* thing here to be spoken to, the Advantageous Improvement of these Particulars, We shall only mention some Conclusions, which the right thoughts of these things, will helpe the Beleever to draw, in order to his possessing a life, in time of Afflictions and Persecutions: As

I. The Afflicted Beleever may say, I need not think it strange, that I am exercised with Afflictions, Temptations and Tribulations: It is no new or uncouth thing that is befallen me; the Captaine of my Salvation was thus, and worse handled; and who am I, that I should think to be exeemed from such a lot? Is it not enough, that the common Souldier be as his Captaine? Nay, will not the common Souldier be glade to share of the Captains lot of Hardship? And should not I rejoyce, that I am honoured to weare my Captains livery

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Livery? His Life was a Life of lasting and growing trouble; and should not I be glade to follow Him, and drink of that Cup, whereof He drank? Affliction was no strange or uncouth thing to Him, and why should it be strange to me? Have I Him, even Him, set before me, for a Copie, and why should I not be most willing to write after this Copie?

2. Hence the Afflicted Beleever may Inferre, I have so little cause to Com-
plaine of all that is befallen me, that, when I consider what Glorious Christ did meet with, I have great cause to Wonder, and Praise, that I am so gentlie dealt with: He hath been very tender towards me; when He might have made my lot much more sad: behold, how He hath pitied me, and considered my weakness. He hath not dealt with me, as He dealt with His own only begotten Son, Jesus Christ: His own dearly beloved Son was other-
wayes exercised, than I have been: He had more sharpe Trials and Temptations, and sadder Exercises to rancountre with, beside the Wrath and fierie Indignation of God, that He had to wrestle with. How mercifully then hath God dealt with me,
that

that *He* hath not made my Torments and Grief inward much more insupportable? O! When I read, how the *Holy* and Just One, the Innocent Lamb of God, was handled by sinners, through the *Holy* Permission and Providence of *God*, and lay my petty troubles in the Ballance with these, how am I made to wonder, that the *Lord* hath not dealt otherwise with me a sinner; and to cry out, who am I that I should have been stroaked with such a gentle *Hand*? Who am I, that *God* should have put so much sugar in my Cup; when the Prince of Life, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, who was *Holy*, Harmless, Undeiled, and separate from Sinners, was otherwise handled? So that right thoughts, of this would make them ashamed to Quarrel with the most *High*; or to repine at his Dispensations with them. When they consider, how others are spared, and they so sharply exercised, their hearts are ready to say, why doth the *Lord* deal so with me? Why doth *He* single me out from others, & deal worse with me, than with them? But if they would presente before their eyes, what *Christ*, the Son of *His* Love, did meet with, they durst not suffer a quarrelling thought to lodge within their heart;

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heart; but all their frettings, and repinings would be turned into wonderings and praises.

3. The Afflicted Beleever would hence draw this Conclusion. Seing Christ was put to suffer such and such evils before me, I may inferre, that the sting, venom and curse of these evils are taken away: Seing *He* hath passed thorow the straits of Affliction, *He* hath made the passage easier and wider for *His* followers: *He* hath sweatened the passage, and taken the sting away; so that now, it cannot hurt or harme so much, as otherwise it would. Christ hath gone thorow Sorrow, Shame, Paines, Wants, Temptations, Mockings, Spittings, Scourgings, Yea and Death it self; and thereby hath paved a Way for *His* Followers, and hath strawed it with flowres of fragant Love; *His* footsteps, all alongs the way, have dropped fatness. O how sweet hath *He* made an hard bed now? *He* became poor, that we might become rich, even while poor; and so might sanctifie Poverty to us. *He* became a man of Sorrowes, and acquainted with grieve, that *He* might sweeten that lot unto *His* Followers, and keep them from the evil of it, from the hurt and poison

son of it. May not this Consideration encourage His Followers, to embrace the Crosse with Love; Complacency, and Delight, when it is thus sweetened to them, and in a manner no Crosse? May not a Prison become an heartsome Palace unto His People, when they consider, how the Prince of Life, the Absolute Lord of all, the Chiefe or Standard-bearer amongst Ten Thousand, was taken from Prison *Esai. 53: 8.*? How welcome should an unjust Sentence from men be, when our blessed Lord was taken also from judgment, and was wickedly condemned for a Traitor? How sweet should the most shamful and painful Death be to us, that the wicked can devise, as the expression of their imbittered malice, and rage; when Noble Jesus was crucified; and so put the most shamful and cursed Death, that could be; seing hereby Death hath lost its sting, and the curse is taken away; for he was made a curse *Gal. 3: vers. 13.*

4. The Afflicted Beleever may hence Inferre, That seing Christ hath thus been exercised himself, He knoweth how to Pity and Sympathize with such, as are so handled. **Was He Mocked, Vilified, Maligned,**

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Maligned, Despised, falsely Accused, Condemned for a Traitor to *Cæsar*, Buffeted, Spit upon, Scourged, and Hanged as a thiefe; He knoweth what it is to be so exercised, and what such a condition calleth for, and what they in such a condition have need of: He knoweth what word of consolation will be fittest for them. And this is no small encouragement unto the Beleever, as was shown above *Consid. 2.*

5. The suffering Beleever may draw this Conclusion. Seing Christ was put to all these sharp and sad sufferings, I may well lay my hand on my mouth, I may put my mouth in the dust, & be silent, let the Lord lay one me what He will: and by this meanes, he may quiet all the insurrections of his spirit against the Lord, and put a check unto all the insolent thoughts, that arise in his mind against the Lord's procedour with him, upon whatloever occasion:
as

(1.) Doth this trouble and vex his spirit, that he is innocent, as to what is laid to his charge, and is persecuted without cause? And will he not be quieted, when he remembereth, how the Innocent lamb of God was handled; how He was mis-used and persecuted, who did never man hurt, who never did sinne, nor was guile found in His
mouth

mouth 1 Pet. 2. vers. 22. They hated and persecuted Him without a cause *Joh. 15. vers. 25.* as they did *David*, who was a type of Him *Psal. 35. vers. 19.* and *69. vers. 4.* See also *Psal. 35. vers. 7.* and *109. vers. 3.* and *119. vers. 78, 161.*

(2.) Doth it vex him to think, that he hath to do with unreasonable men, worse than Heathens or Turks? And will not this stop his mouth, That they can be no more rude, absurd, cruel and unreasonable, than those with whom Christ had to do? What faire law or justice could Christ get? They could not get so much as false witnesses to agree in any thing to accuse Him of; yet they would persecute Him to the death. *Pilat* was convinced of his Innocency, and yet did deliver Him to be crucified. What men more irrational, than the brutish, ignorant rabble, set on by judicially-blinded and enraged Ring-leaders, the Priests and Rulers?

(3.) Doth it vex them to think, that their own familiar friends and acquaintances turn their back upon them, and refuse to comfort them? And had not Christ this to wrestle against, when all fled and forsook Him, and His own Disciple betrayed Him; Is it not said, that He came unto His

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His own, and that His own received Him not? *Joh. 1: 11.*

(4.) Doth it trouble them to think, that they are exercised with many troubles at once, and which is worst of all, when outward troubles are lying on, the Lord is hiding His face? And I pray, was not this also Christ's lot? was not He put to cry out, even while on the cross, and within a few minutes of expiring and of giving up the ghost, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And had He not a sadder inward exercise, while in the garden, where He was made to sweat drops of blood, than any that can befall them? He had the weight of Law-wrath to bear, that was due to all the Elect ones; but the hidings, which Beleevers can meet with, are only fatherly with-drawings.

(5.) If the duration and continuance of the trouble and affliction come into their mindes, and vex them; let them think, that it cannot be worse with them, than it was with the Lord Christ, whose whole life was a life of suffering: we read of His weeping, but never of His laughing. How oft was He in hazard of His life, even from His Infancie? How was He maligned, slandered, called a Devil, a glutton and a wine-biber, a profane Person? How oft were

F snares

snare laid for Him? and how did Trouble follow Him to His grave?

6. The afflicted Beleever may hence In-ferre, That it is his duty to study and to endeavour patience: for in this did Christ leave us an example, that we should follow His steps 1 Pet. 2. vers. 21. In this passage of Peter, we have some particulars, which were evidences, proofs or effects of Patience in Christ, in all which we should labour to follow our Example: as

(1.) As He was free of sin, before He began to suffer, & His Enemies could lay no sin to His charge; so, while He was under their hands, all the paine and trouble, they put Him to, caused Him not to sinne in thought, word, or deed: So should the Sufferer labour & strive against sin: It is true, we cannot be sinless, and our corruptions will work; yet it is our duty to wrestle against corruptions, and to set a watch upon the door of our lips, and to guard our hearts; or rather to give heart and tongue and all unto Christ to keep; that we may be helped to suffer holily, to His glory.

(2.) When He was reviled, He reviled not againe; when He suffered, He threatned not. When they were doing the worst they could do against Him, He did not in the least requite them, or wish harme

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unto them; but on the contrary, as we heard *Luk. 24. 34.* He prayed the Father to forgive them. So in this should we endeavour to follow our copie, and thereby give proof of our Christian Patience; to bless when they curse us, and pray for them, when they dispitfully use us, and persecute us; and to do them good, that hate us: thus shall we evidence that we are the Children of our Father, who is in heaven *Mat. 5: 44, 45.*

(3.) *He committed Himself to Him, that judgeth righteously:* He referred Himself and His Cause unto the righteous Judge of quick and dead. So should we do, we should not fret our selves because of evil doers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity; but commit our way unto the Lord, and trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to passe *Psalm, 37. vers. 1, 5.* waite for His decision, who is the righteous Judge.

Further, the right Consideration of this Patience of Christ, in all His sufferings, would help us unto a more Christian and Patient way of bearing the crosse; for we would see ground to say,

(1.) Was Christ, who did no sin, put to all this suffering; and did He bear it all with

wonderful patience ; and should I take it ill , to be thus persecuted , seeing , howbeit men have no just quarrel against me ; yet God hath just cause to pursue me ? Was sinless and holy Jesus patient , and should I be impatient , who am punished of God , less than mine iniquities deserve ?

(2.) Was Christ so patient under such an heaue cross , with which mine is not to be compared , or named in one day ; and should I be impatient , and thereby offend God more ? It were better for me , to be following my copie , and keeping mine hands clean of sin , let the crosse be what it will.

(3.) Could not all the wrongs , that Christ met with at the hands of cruel and ungrate wretches , move Him once to give them one evil word , or to wish them the least evil imaginable ; But did He rather pray for them ? And is it fit for me to be wishing them evil in my heart ? Should I not rather desire to imitate Christ , and to strive against mine own passion , and willingly forgive them all the wrongs , they do unto me ?

(4.) Did Christ commit His cause to God , and waite for His decision ? And should not I possesse my soul in patience ,
resting

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resting on God by faith, that He will judge all these wrongs and injuries, in due time? Is not God the judge? And doth not vengeance belong unto Him? And should I think to dethrone Him, and take his office and work upon me? Oh! It is better, that I follow Christ, & roll all over on God, and quiet my Soul in hope of a righteous Determination from God, the righteous judge of all the world.

7. The right consideration of Christ's sufferings upon such an account, as to men, I mean, His suffering because He affirmed Himself to be a King, would make the Beleever, called to suffer upon that same account, (*to wit*, for Asserting, Maintaining, Avowing, and by their actions and practice Declaring, that Christ is King, and only King and Head over His spiritual Kingdom and Church,) rejoice in that honour, that is put upon him, to be called to witness unto such a Truth, that Christ Himself was a Martyr for, in respect of Men. O! how should this fill the hearts of such with joy, & make them sing, in the midst of the flames, and rejoice in that they are counted worthy to suffer for so noble a cause, or for the least branch thereof.

8. From Christ suffering so willingly,

so cheerfully, so resolutely for the unjust, for sinners, and for rebels, the Suffering beleever will draw this Conclusion: did Christ suffer such things, and that so cheerfully, heartily and willingly for my cause; and should not I be ready to suffer cheerfully, heartily and willingly for his Cause, Word, Truth, and Interest? So that this would hearten unto an hearty and couragious witnessing for the Lord, and for His Truth, and for the Word of His Patience, and shame the man from a discouraged, faint-hearted, dead and drouping manner of following Christ, and of bearing His cross; for he would see cause to say, did Christ suffer so much for unworthy, sinful, nothing Me, and that with so much Patience, Cheerfulness, Stedfastness and fixed Resolution; and should I be ashamed of Him, who is the God of glory, the Prince of the Kings of the earth, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, or of His Cause and Interest? Should I carry, when suffering upon His account, and upon the account of His Truth, His Word, His Testimony, His work and Interest, as if I were an evil door? Should I carry, as if I repented of owning Him, and His Interest? No, no,

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no, I should account it my glory, as it is indeed.

CONSIDERATION. XII.

Our Sufferings are nothing comparable to Christ's.

WHen we spoke to the last Consideration, we mentioned something of this: But because more is to be said of it, and it may be edifyingly Improved, for the ends designed; we shall speak a little more to it here by it self, though it be but a branch of the former. And for this cause, we shall do these two things. 1. We shall mention some particulars, whereby the disproportion betwixt Christ's Sufferings and Ours, will appear manifest. 2. We shall shew how thoughts of these may prove advantagious unto a Christians spiritual life, in a day of Affliction and Tribulation.

In order to the understanding of the *first*, we would take notice.

1. That the disproportion is infinite, in respect of the Persons suffering: what are we, Yesterday-Nothings, base and

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worthless wormes, whose life is in our nostrils, vaine empty shadowe? But He is the standart-bearer amongst Ten Thousand *Cant. 5. vers. 10.* The wonderful Counsellour, the Mighty God; the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace *Esai. 9. vers. 6.* This maketh that all our Sufferings are not worthie to be compared with His. We know, that the Greatness, Nobility, Worth and Dignity of the Person, who is put to suffer, maketh the Sufferings more in the account of men, than otherwise they would be. That a poor, base, unworthy beggar is scourged, spit upon and buffeted, is nothing, or not much considerable; but to see a King, a Prince, or great Noble-man so used, that is a considerable matter, in the eyes of men. It is not much to see beggars sitting on dung-hills; but it is much to see such, as did feed delicatly, sit desolat in the streets; and to see such as were brought up in scarlet, embracing dunghills; that is indeed matter of a lamentation. *Lam. 4. vers. 5.* To see base men contemned and flighted is not much; but to see Princes hanged-up by their hand, and the faces of Elders not honoured, that is sad and lamentable *Lam. 5. vers. 12.* So it is
not

not much to see us, base, unworthy, sinful and nothing creatures, suffering, and put to hardships, disgrace, paine, shame, miserie and wants: But to see the Prince of the Kings of the earth in disgrace; to see the Lord of life killed, the Son of God despised, the King of Kings spit upon, and put to paine; to see the Heire of all things suffering want; that is an uncouth sight. This maketh Christ's sufferings incomparably great, and all our Sufferings nothing in comparison with these, even when ours are at the greatest. What are the sufferings of a beast, of a worme, or the like, unto the sufferings of the greatest Prince that ever was, or unto the sufferings of an Angel? And yet the worme being a creature, as well as the Prince or Angel, the difference is not so very great: but the difference is Infinitely more great, betwixt the sufferings of Christ, who is God, equal with the Father in power, and the sufferings of the greatest King or Emperour, or Angel that ever was, because there is no comparison betwixt Finite and Infinite, betwixt God and the Creature.

2. We know it is much more for one to suffer Death, while in the flower of his age, and in the prime of his Strength, and

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who in all probability, according to his natural Constitution, might live many years; than for one, who is half Dead already, and is carrying about with him the Sentence of Death, his Body being decayed, and his clay-cottage ruinous, and almost fallen to the ground: So in this respect Christs Sufferings are far beyond ours; for our Clay-bodies are so rotten with Corruption, so broken with sicknesses and diseases, that a few years should put an end to our dayes, and we should quickly return unto dust, though no hand were stretcht out against us; yea, though all imaginable meanes were used, to keep us in vigour and life. But Christs Body, though a true Body, yet was naturally free of these Corruptions, that come because of sin, which our Bodies are obnoxious unto: We never read of his sickness. And though his death was not wholly miraculous, yet we may not say, that He would have died naturally, as other men do, though no violent hands had been laid upon Him.

3. We use to think much more of his sufferings, who suffereth wrongously and without Cause, than of his, who suffereth deservedly; We will not be much moved

moved to see a bloody Murderer put to Death; but it will move us much to see a man put to death, against whom nothing worthie of Death can be alleiged. So, in this respect, our Sufferings are nothing in comparison of Christs; for however, as to men, we should suffer innocently; yet there is ground for God to plead His controverſie against us, and to use these, as Instruments of His Justice, to execute His righteous Sentence against us. But it was otherwayes as to Christ, who, though as standing in the room of the Elect, and made their Cautioner, and so made sin for them, or had their sin imputed to Him, He was smitten of Justice; yet as to His own Person, He was the Innocent Lamb of God, and without sin, Holy, Harmless, Undeſiled. And as to men, He suffered most wrongously, as was ſeen above.

4. The difference is great in this respect, That Mercy is Master of work, standing at the ſide of the founace, and ordering the ſame, while His people are lying into it: But the Law-wrath and Justice of God was blowing at the coal of Christs Sufferings. We have to do but with men, whose Actions are over-

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ruled by the Omnipotent hand of a Merciful God? But He had to do with God, executing Law-Justice, because He stood in the room of the Elect. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon Him. He bear the iniquity and sin of many *Esai.* 53. v. 5, 6, 11, 12. His own self bear our sins, in his own Body, on the tree 1 *Pet.* 2: v. 24. It is not so with the Lords People; He dealeth not with them, in pure Wrath, or in Justice; but in Mercy and in Moderation. The Cup, that Christ had to drink, was full of the purest Law-wrath, and so bitter, that His Holy Sinless Soul did scunner at it: But in the Cup of his Children, there is not one drop of the revenging Justice of God, or of Law-wrath; but much of His Fatherly Mercy, and it smelleth strongly of Love; for He is bringing about their good hereby. Therefore the disproportion betwixt Christ's Sufferings and ours is Infinite, upon this account.

5. Put the case (which yet will not be) that God should deal with any of His owne, according to strict Severity, and
Law.

Law-Justice ; yet could not their Sufferings be comparable unto Christs. Though they were pursued by pure Justice, and by Law-vengeance, and sent away to everlasting flames, they should not, for all that, endure what *He* endured ; for they should but suffer, in that case, for their own particular and personal faults : But Christ bear the sins of many, even of all the Elect : And this would make the difference great : How much greater then must the difference now be, when their Sufferings are of a far other Nature ?

6. This will be further clear, if we Consider, how Christ did not only undergo the Debt of the Elect, and wrestled with strictest Law-Justice ; but by *His* Sufferings, *He* made full Satisfaction to Justice ; which they all, for whom Christ died, had never been able in hell to have done ; there had they lyen, forever, and had never come out of prison ; for they had never been able to have satisfied Justice : But what Christ Suffered was full Satisfaction to Justice, that it could crave no more ; the Bond and Obligation was cancelled on the Crosse, and Christ cried out, *It is finished* ; intimating that the last penny was payed. • Thus Christ suffered

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more, than all of them could have done, for all Eternity : and so certainly *His* sufferings were transcendently and surpassing great ; and the hardest of our Sufferings ought not to be named in one day with *His*.

In Order to the Improving of this, (which is the *Second Particular*) we shall mention these few things,

1. Were this Consideration rightly thought on, and improven, *His* people would not be so much troubled and affrighted, in a time of Sufferings, as usually they are. We see how *Christ* went up to *Jerusalem*, and set *His* face to go thitherward, resolving to go thither, notwithstanding of all Impediments in the way ; and albeit *His* Disciples were averse from that journey, and would have dissuaded *Him* from it ; *He* went thither with a full Resolution, though *He* knew *He* was to grapple not only with the King of Terrours there, but with pure Law-Curse and Wrath, because of the Sins of *His* chosen ones : And what should make *His* people afraid, who have little or nothing to meet with, in comparison of what *Christ* did meet with ; they have nothing of Law-wrath, and of pure Vindictive

dictive Iustice to meet with, as Christ had to rancountre with, in full measure: Iustice is now satisfied in their behalfe; and it is their mistake to think, that in and by Afflictions, God is pursuing them in wrath: It is true, there may be fatherly anger and displeasure in the Cup, Which they get to drink; but Christ drank-out the Curse, and satisfied Vindictive Iustice, and there is no payment to Iustice, no not one farthing required of them, in all their Sufferings. So that Beleevers have not so great cause to fear, as they suppose.

2. Were this rightly considered, the people of God would carry more like Saints under Afflictions, than they do: They are oftentimes, when sore afflicted, saying within themselves, why doth the Lord deal so with me? Are not many worse than I am more gentlie dealt with. Oh! They consider not what Holy and Harmless *Jesus* was made to suffer. Sure, if they considered this, they durst repine and fret in their mindes no more. What though they have been innocent, as to men; and vvhhat though they be sincere and upright, as to God? Yet they are sinners, and Christ, vvhho never sinned, vvas other-
wayes

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vwayes handled both at the hands of God and Man, than they are, though their Afflictions and Sufferings vvere many vwayes multiplied.

3. Right thoughts of this would teach them to carry the yoke with very great patience and submission of Soul: Holy Jesus had another sort of yoke upon His blessed neck; and yet he bore it with wonderful Patience, yea with Holy Delight. Why then should they be so impatient under their light and easie Yoke? It is little they have to bear, yea nothing, in comparison of what Christ stood under.

4. Seing Christ suffered so much, and bore the Curse, what have beleevvers now to endure, or lye under? The height they can be reckoned to, is but small remnants of what fell on Christ in a full flood; and what they meet with is wholly free of Vindictive Wrath. They suffer but some little thing of that, which is behinde of the Sufferings of Christ *Col. 1: vers. 24.* Christ trode the Wine-press, He hath gone thorow the sea, and all the mighty waves thereof: The shoure of Law-vengeance fell on His face, in its full force and might; and there is nothing of that left.

left, but small drops of the outward Affliction, freed of the Curse, left behinde for His Followers. Have not His Followers then cause of Rejoicing, upon this account, in the midst of all their Afflictions?

5. Though trouble increase, yet they ought to be quiet, and possesse their Soul in Patience; for it will never increase to that height, that it will be equal to Christ's trouble: Though their Afflictions come to the heighest, that men can bring them to: Yet will they be infinitely below the Afflictions, that Christ suffered. Have any then cause to complaine, when they are so gentlie dealt vvith; and vvhen all their Afflictions are in a manner no Afflictions, in comparison of Christs?

6. We are oft ready to look upon our Sufferings thorovv a magnifying glasse, and take notice of all Considerations, that may serve to heighten them; and thus vve take a vvay to create much more trouble and vexation to ourselves, and to make our life more sad and bitter: But the right improvement of this Consideration vvould prevent all this; for vvould vve take a right viewv of the inconceivably great and unparalleled Sufferings of Christ, ours in comparison

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parison of these , would soon evanish out of sight , and disappear as nothing : And thus would we be brought to bear our Affliction with full Subjection of Soul , with silence , yea and with thankful acknowledgment of Gods Graciousness and Tenderness , who hath dealt so gently with us , when He might have made the yoke more , yea much more , heavy and insupportable.

7. Who , taking a right View of what Christ suffered , will not think themselves called to suffer for His sake , with great willingness and cheerfulness ? May not every Beleever say , did Christ undergo the heavy weight of the Wrath of God , for me ? Did He lye under the Law-curse , and bear the blowes of Vindictive Justice , for me ? Stood He betwixt me , and the pure Wrath of a sin-revenging God ? Did He drink the bitter Cup , the Gall and the Worm-wood of Law-vengeance , that I might be freed therefrom ? Did He bear that , under which I should have lyen to all eternity , that I might never come into that place of torment ? And what Affliction , Persecution , Tribulation , Distress , Sorrow , Paine and Suffering should I think too much for Him and His sake ?

Seing

Seing He endured for me the brunt of the battel, and stood-out the sharpest of the storm and hail of Divine Wrath, and Law-Indignation; why should not I be content to bear a drop of mans Wrath, or of the storme of mans Indignation, which is free of the Curse and of pure Wrath, for Him and for His Interest? Hath He suffered so much for me, and shall I think much to suffer such a small matter for Him? Is there no proportion betwixt what He willingly endured, to save me from Hell and from the Wrath of a Sin-revenging God, and what I can be put to suffer for Him, and His Testimonie? And shall I notwithstanding be unwilling to undergo such a small inconsiderable bit of suffering for His Glory, and for the Word of His Patience? Drank he the Cup of pure Wrath for me, and shall I think much to drink a drop of cold Water for Him? O how willing and cheerful would the right apprehension of this Consideration, make the Believer, to undergo all that men could devise, for His Lord and Master?

CON-

CONSIDERATION XIII.

Suffering hath been the Lot
of Christ's Church, in
all Ages.

ORdinarily when the Church and People of God meet with new trials and troubles, they cry out, as the Church did of old *Lam. 1: v. 12. Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow*: They presently conclude, that their case hath not a parallel, and that the Church in no age did meet with such a dispensation, as they are under: Hence proceedeth much sorrow. But if it were considered, that the Church in all Ages (very few excepted) hath met with the like or sorer trouble, and hath drunk of that same cup, that is now at their Head, they could not but see cause of laying their hand upon their mouth, and sitting silent in the dust, as being convinced, that there were no new thing under the Sun; Therefore, seeing this Consideration may be of use, in order to a spiritual Life under Afflictions, we shall speak a little to it; and in order

are the Lot of the Church. 141

to the right improvement thereof, lay down these following Particulars to be pondered.

1. The only Wise God hath thought good, for His own Holy ends, that His Church should be a Militant Church here, should taste of the Worm-wood & the Gall of Affliction, and wade thorow Trouble and Persecution: He hath seen it fit, that she should be in a wilderness Condition here: And so it hath been in almost all ages, as might be evidenced, if necessary.

2. Not only hath the Church of God met with Affliction; but the cup hath been long at her Head, without any intermission. The seed of *Abraham* were to be strangers, to serve and be afflicted foure hundereth yeers and more, even from *Ismaels* beginning to mock, until they were delivered out of *Egypt* *Gen.* 15: v. 13. *Act.* 7: 6, 7. with *Exod.* 12: 41. Was not the Church kepted fourtie yeers wandering in the Wilderness, before she came to rest? And when settled in the promised Land, how many yeers together was she oppressed by Enemies? sometimes Eight *Iudg.* 3: 8. then Eighteen *vers.* 14. then Twenty *Iudg.* 4: v. 3. Then Senventie Years in captivity in Babylon.

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Babylon. And we know, how the Christian Church was in an afflicted and persecuted condition, in the primitive times, three hundereth Yeers, untill *Constantine* the great came to the Empire; and how long she hath groaned under Antichrist's tyrannie.

3. The Lord also thinketh good, to renew the daies of the Church her sorrow; after some warm blains, and some short respite; as the primitive Church had, in the intervals betwixt the Ten vehement and fiery Persecutions, some whereof were of longer, some of shorter continuance: After a respite, He sendeth a new storme; so that her calamities are like waves of the sea, ere one be well away, another cometh. Hence the *Psalmist* saith Ps. 129. vers. 1, 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth.*

4. Yea moreover, the Lord seeth good to afflict her, with billowes of waves of His displeasure, and to afflict her very sore: as *Esai.* 64. vers. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Be not wroth very sore ——— Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid*

laid waste: wilt thou refraine thy self for these things? O Lord, wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? This was a fore stroke, which destroyed both Church and State.

5. Some times the Church hath to do with moe Enemies, than one, at once: See Psal. 83. ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. *For they have consulted together with one consent, they are confederat against thee. The Tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagareus, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, the Philistines with the Inhabitants of Tyre. Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot.* This was a dreadful conspiracy of all the Enemies round about, both far and neer; and their designe was, to cut off the people of God from being a Nation, that the Name of Israel might be no more in remembrance vers. 4. As Herod and Pilat will agree, when they are to concurre to the cutting off of Christ; so these Enemies, though sometimes at variance among themselves, yet can agree in one to joine their forces together, to destroy and cut off, if they could, the Inheritance of the Lord.

6. Withall the Lord may hide His face, in the midst of these outward calamities,
and

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and refuse to give light, comfort, counsel or direction. She may be afflicted and tossed with tempests, and withall not comforted. *How hath the Lord* (said the Church *Lam. 2. v. 1, 3*) *covered the Daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger? — He burned against Jacob, like a flame of fire* See also *Chap. 3: 8, 9, 10, 11, &c.* and several other passages.

7. Sometime the Lord so ordereth the affliction, as that the very timeing of it, maketh it much more heavy, than otherwise it would be; as when His people are secure, and crying peace, peace. The Israelites thought all was well, when they were gotte out of Egypt; but ere they were awar, how quickly were they environed with new Difficulties, pursued by Pharaoh, & all his hosts; & having the red sea before, and no way to escape upon either hand, doubtless the very season & time of this new difficulty made it very grievous. It cannot be but sad, when it is with the Church, as *Jeremie* saith of the Church, in his time *Ier. 8: v. 15.* and *14: 19.* *We looked for peace, but no good came, for a time of healing, and behold trouble.*

8. Not only is the Church put to contend with open Enemies; but she is also much molested

molested with false friends, who, under pretence of friendship, seek to ruine her; These prove most dangerous Enemies, as traitours within a besieged place. While she is prospering, many offer their service to her, and seem to be cordial friends, and yet are but a mixed multitude, who, when the first occasion offers, will seek to returne to Egypt: for all their profession of kindness and friendship, when a fit opportunity offereth, there are none more bitter Enemies, than they are. So that it oft fareth with her, as Paul said it would fare, after his death, with the Church of Ephesus, in respect of Hereticks and false Teachers *Act. 20. vers. 29. 30 For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wov'es enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things &c.*

9. Yea, so low may the Church sometimes be brought, under the feet of adversaries. that little hope may remaine of her recovery; yea she may be looked on by one and other, as in a desperat and forlorne condition; so that even many of the faithful may be shaken in their hops, and saying, will the Lord be favourable no more? Are His mercies clean gone? Doth His promise fail for ever more? Hath He forgotten
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to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Such may be her condition, that all humane probability of her recovery may be gone, and the faithful have nothing but a bare haire of hope to hold by, or a small plank of a promise, & that also under the waters of contrary dispensations, to stand upon; and so far may the delivery be out of sight, that, when it beginneth to dawne, they may be as those that dream *Pf. 126. vers. 1.*

10. Yet withall it is considerable, that notwithstanding of all the opposition, made by the Devil and his Instruments, against the Church, she hath been a burning bush, and yet not consumed: though she hath been many a time afflicted, and that from her youth, yet her adversaries have not prevailed against her: the plowers have often plowed upon her back, and made long their furrowes; yet still the righteous Lord hath cut the cordes of the wicked *Psa. 129. vers. 1, 2, 3, 4.* Many an arrow have they shot at her; yet mount Zion stands, and she hath her Towers, Bulwarcks and Palaces *Psal. 48.* She is founded upon the rock of ages, and the ports of hell cannot prevail against her *Mat. 16.* No Weapon, that is formed against Israel, shall prosper *Eesai. 54: 17.*

If these particulars were rightly thought upon and improven, we might be helped thereby to a life of Faith and Hope, both in reference to the sad condition of the Church in general, and also in reference to our own particular suffering condition.

And first, In reference to the Church, we may from these particulars see ground of giving a check to our Inferences from the Lords's present Dispensations with His Church, favouring of Unbeleef, Despondency, Discouragment and Hopelessness. We see, it is true, the Church overwhelmed with sorrow, sitting as a widow, and her teares upon her face: We see her looking pale, as if death were in her face, all beauty and liveliness gone, her Enemies multiplying and prospering daily, and the Church still sincking more and more in the sea of sorrow and distress. Many, it is true, are ready to say, can this be the true Church, and these the real people of God, whose life is thus constantly made bitter with renewed stormes and tempests of adversity? Can this indeed be the work of God, which is thus cast down to the ground, and trampled under-foot? Would the Lord stand by and look on, when His spouse (if she were so indeed) is thus abused by the vilest

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vilest of men? Would He suffer His Name and Work to be thus blasphemed? True, all this and much more may be said, and be done against His Church, and she remaine the true Church of Christ; and His work be His work. It hath been so before now; and there is no new thing under the Sun. And the right thoughts of what is said would prevent the trouble, that such Atheistical and perplexing thoughts necessarily cause, if they be admitted and fomented. Hath not the Church of Christ been a militant Church from the beginning? hath there not been a constant enmity betwixt the seed of the Serpent, and the seed of the woman? Is it any new thing to see the Church driven to the wilderness, and tossed in the sea of afflictions? Is it any unheard-of thing, that the Church must be tossed betwixt winde and wave, and have stormes and tides and all against her? Is it any new thing to see the Church, even while within the sight of the haven of an happy and glorious Reformation, driven back to sea againe? What? hath she not oftentimes seemed to on-lookers to be sunck? have not false friends many a time sought to drive her upon rocks, or cut her cables, that she might be left to the mercy of the seas; or to make lecks, that she might sinck to the ground

ground? Is outward prosperity the mark of the true Church? No: let Antichrist make it a mark of his, seing so the Papists will. The Church of Christ must be the speckled bird; She must have many horns in her side: Her rest and triumphant state is above; though, it is true, she may have some breathing times, some lucide intervals, and a more glorious day, when the Vial is poured forth on the Seat of the Beast, *Euphrates* dried up, and the Kings of the East brought in, and when *Babylon* the great is fallen, *Gog* and *Magog* destroyed, and the Beast and the false Prophet cast into the lake of brimstone; but then the end of her warfare will be nigh.

Againe would we call to mind, how often the Church hath been very low, and her Enemies singing a triumph, as if they had gotten an everlasting victory, and as if they were assured, that the Name of Israel should be no more mentioned; and yet the Lord hath hithertill saved, and hath brought that broken Vessel saife to land. Notwithstanding of all that the red Dragon the Hethenish Emperours did in persecuting, with their bloody massacres, the Christian Church, the first three hundred Years; yet the Church of Christ, grew and multiplied and spread over all the Empire. And

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though the Antichristian abomination did prevail in the Church, and the woman was made to flee to the wilderness 42 moneths, or 1260 dayes, or Years, from the Year 660 or 666 (as some compute) untill the Reformation 1550. or 1560. Yet notwithstanding of this long desolation and darkness, dureing which time the Gentiles possessed the outter court, the Lord in his own goodtime, in the dayes of *Luther* and afterward, made light break up, and made the world see, that His Church was not yet destroyed. And though now Antichrist be thinking to possesse the outter Court againe, and to destroy the Reformation & to make even the lands, that were by solemne Covenant devoted unto Christ, as His peculiar Inheritance, become lands of graven images, and brought under his tyrannie: yet the Lord liveth, & we are to waite in faith & hop and to possess our souls in patience; for now is the faith & patience of the Saints; & to beleeve, that in due time, He, who hath begun to poure forth the vials of His wrath upon that Antichristian cursed conspiracy, will also make an end: & in His own good time shall poure forth the Vial on the Beast *Revel. 16. vers. 10.* And the judgment of the great whore shall come, that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the Kings of
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the earth have committed fornication, even the woman, that sitteth upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of Names of Blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns, arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearles, having a golden Cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, upon whose fore-head is a Name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And which is drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyres of Jesus. Which is manifestly interpreted by the Spirit of God (*Revel. 17. vers. 8. to the end.*) to be the Papal Church and State, sitting at Rome and commanding all. Wherefore it becometh all, who love their lives, to take notice of that word *Revel. 18. vers. 4, 5.*

—— Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, &c. for the day is coming, when it shall be said (as it is *vers. 6, 7, 8, &c.*)¹ *Rewarde her, even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup, which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified her self and lived delicioust, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit*

a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no Sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire; for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her. Let us live in hope, that the day shall come, when what followeth there shall be fulfilled, and it shall be said, as vers. 20. Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye Holy Apostles and Prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And it shall be found true, that is said vers. 21. And a mighty Angel took up a stone, like a great milstone, and cast it into the Sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great City Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And that shall be verified, which is foretold Chap. 19. A great voice shall be heard of much people, saying Allelujah, Salvation and Glory, and Honour and Power unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the Blood of His Servants at her hand, vers. 1, 2.

Next, This Consideration may be improved by particular Believers, in reference to their particular Exercises and Afflictions: For hence they might inferre,

1. That they have no cause to complean, but reason rather to lay their hand upon their mouth, what ever way the Lord be pleased

to exercise them and what ever Affliction He lay upon their loines; for this hath been the ordinary Lot of the Church; and seing the Lord thinketh good to exercise her with sore and sharpe trials, in all Ages: Why may He not also exercise them, in Particular?

2. That they have yet less cause to compleane or be dissatisfied, seing the Church, their Common Mother, hath met with sadder and sorer Crosses and Distresses, than they have met with, or can meet with: It is a sadder sight to see the Mother put to the door, and sitting in a Wilderness, weeping and refusing to be comforted; than to see a Child whipped.

3. That they have reason to rejoyce, in their sad Lot, upon this account, that they are not in that solitary and lamentable Condition alone; their Mother is suffering with them. Are they in a Wilderness, so is she: are they sitting in the dust, so is their Mother sitting with them.

4. That by this they see, they are no Bastards, but Children of the House, suffering with the Mother, and no other wayes dealt with, than the Mother is.

5. That Crosses and a Course of Affliction are no evidence of the Lords not-own-

ing or looking upon them as His Children; as corruption and unbeleeve would prompt them to inferre and conclude: Afflictions can no more say, that they are not the Children of God; than Afflictions on the Church can say, that she is not the Church of Christ, nor His Spouse.

6. That they may comfort themselves, in their Troubles, with the Mother her Consolations; and as it were lye in her lap or bosome, and partake of her cordials, and feed with her upon the same promises, until the night be over, and the day dawn, and the time of the singing of the birds come, and the voice of the turtle be heard in the land, and until the Beleevers God and the Church her Husband wipe all teares away from the face both of Mother and Child.

CONSIDERATION. XIV.

**Other precious Beleevers
have been Afflicted so, if
not worse.**

THough such, as are case in Zion, think little of all the Trouble and Anguish, that

that the Afflicted are put unto; and not a few prove like *Jobs* Friends *Job*. 6: v. 15. &c. though to him, that is afflicted Pity should be shewne vers. 14. Yet such, as are under the Affliction, can subscribe to the truth of that, which the Wise Man hath *Prov*. 15: 15. *All the dayes of the afflicted are evil*: for, so long as the Affliction endureth, they are ready to think, that their Condition groweth worse and worse daily. Nay, ordinarily Affliction so seazeth upon them, that they cannot perceive the Grounds of Comfort, though hard at hand, and can make little use of Cordials, though within their reach. A time of Affliction is such a thoughtful time, that they are as a Ship at Sea, tossed with Tempests and contrary Tides. Among other disturbing thoughts, this is one, *How* is this (think they with themselves) that the Lord hath pitched upon me, and singled me out, from all the rest, or the most part of His Children, at least, whom I know, and set me up for His mark, at which He is shooting His Arrowes? My case is not like the ordinary case of others; there is something extraordinary in my case: I know, that His Followers have been in Affliction, but their Affliction was nothing comparable to mine: Were all things laid together, my Affliction would be found to be of another kind:

Were my Affliction but such as others have had , I should be able to bear it; but there being something Odde and Uncouth in mine , I cannot choose but be troubled.

Though He only, who comforteth those, that are cast down, can comfort such , *2 Cor. 6: vers. 7.* Yet he can do it by unlikely meanes , and blesse a few words to this end. We shall therefore only propose a few things , that may serve to make a Diversion , as to these perplexing and disturbing thoughts; and reduce them to these few Heads.

First, We shall propose a few Generals , which such afflicted persons would take notice of.

Secondly. Shew how, possibly , their case is not so singular , as they conceive it to be.

Thirdly, We shall show, how little cause they would, possibly , be found to have , to speak thus , if all things were well considered.

Fourthly, We shall show, how that, seeing they will take notice of others, and compare their case with theirs , they may and should improve the example of others, better than thus.

As to the *First* , let these Particulars be considered.

I. It is

1. It is ordinary almost with every one to be accounting their own case and condition, in Affliction, singular; and to say, as much as those of whom we are now speaking. Every one feeleth that best, which is neereſt to himself: they are more sensible of their own paine, than of the pain of others; and paine felt is more touching, than what is understood by the report of others only. Hence every one is ready to conclude, that their own case is worst. And therefore this should be looked upon, as no strange thing.

2. Every bodies Temper and Disposition not being alike, some may be obnoxious to distempers and diseases, that others are not much acquainted with; and some by their Folly and Intemperancy may bring peculiar diseases upon themselves; and when such must have peculiar Physick, adapted to their diseases, should they compleane of the Physician; that he giveth them not such gentle and easie Medicines, as he doth to others? So the compleaner here may have brought upon himself some uncouth spiritual distemper, which calleth for some Afflictions, more than ordinary, to cure the same: Should they then be anxious to finde out a precedent, or one that hath been so handled, as they are? Ought they not rather,

ther, to reasone thus with themselves. doth the Lord purge and afflict me more than ordinary, then it is like my peccant humors, & my corruptions, have been more than ordinary.

3. Be it so, that thy case is in some respects singular, what knoweth thou, if there shall be two found, in all particulars, or in all considerable circumstances, every way alike? May not the Lord hereby declare and preach forth his Infinite Wisdom, in guiding so many Sones and Daughters to glory, through so many several Kindes of Trials, Exercises, Afflictions and Temptations? Will it not be much to His Glory, when every one of the Redeemed shall, beside their wondering at the gracious Work of Redemption, common to them all, have each something peculiar to himself, raising his Admiration? As it commends the wonderful Workmanship of God, that among so many millions of faces of Men, two shall hardly be found, betwixt which no difference shall be discovered; so, may not this commend the Work of Gods Providence?

4. And what if, as to those Particulars, wherein they think their owne case singular, it be otherwayes indeed? Have they had through acquaintance with all the Saints of
God

been so, or worse afflicted, 159

God, in all ages? Why then do they speak so confidently?

5. But be it so, as they say; yet they should know, that they are in the hands of a well skilled Physician, and of a tender Father, who knoweth their Constitution, their Distemper, and their Strength; and will make the Physick no stronger, than He knoweth they can bear, and will work, and do them good. And this should cause them forget their complaints.

6. All that people say, while under a distemper, must not be taken for certaine. *Iob* had many expressions, while under the Affliction, that he would not owne or approve of, afterward.

As to the *Second Head*, that we may come neerer their case, what if it be found, that even as to these same Particulars, upon the account of which they account their case singular, others, of whom we read in Scripture, have been in the like case before? We shall therefore mention some Particulars, which people in Affliction use to aggravat their case from, and because of, look upon their case as singular,

1. Some may think their case singular upon this account, That they never knew much in experience what prosperity meant; their

their Life hath been nothing but a Life of Exercises, Temptations and Trouble. Such would know, that some therefore would possibly think, they might bear Afflictions the better, being so accustomed therewith, and inured thereunto, and trained up at that School. But however, they erre, if they think, that this case is singular, or that none but they have been so exercised; not to mention our Lord Jesus, whose Life was a Life of bitterness, as we saw above; see one Instance of *Heman Psalm 88: vers. 15. I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up.* His Trouble and Affliction was not of Yesterday; He was under it from his youth:

2. Others, it may be, will complaine, and think their Affliction so much the sadder, that they have not been much enured with, nor trained up at the School of Affliction; & that if they had been used with Trouble, they would have thought this, that now lyeth upon them, the more light and easy to be born; but now, having been so long in prosperity, and at ease, the Affliction coming is more terrible, and seemeth more insupportable. Oh what is man, that will thus abuse and pervert all things; and can be satisfied with almost nothing! Others would look upon this Dispensation as gentle and

been so; or worse afflicted. 161

indeasie, and as a great favour, and yet what some would account a mitigating ingredient, others will look upon, as a great aggravation. Some would say, that such were not much to be pitied, who have had such a long Summer-day of prosperity: who would think much, if a Ship, that hath for many dayes had a faire winde, should towards the end of her Voyage, meet with a contrary blast; But the truth is, so rebellious are our hearts, that none of Gods Dispensations with us, can satisfie us; and every Body is better pleased with anothers Lot, than with his owne; and therefore we are so ready to choose any condition, but what God is pleased to carve out unto us; and we think every bodies Affliction is more easie, than our owne; and we could bear any Lot better, than what we are called to bear. May it not be thought, that such as compleane upon this account, would complaine much more, if it were with them, as it was with *Asaph Psal. 73: v. 14.* *All the day long have I been plagued and chastened ever morning.* However such as cry-out, because after a long time of prosperity, they meet with adversity, would know that their case, in this, is not singular; as *Jobs* instance can evince, who was not much acquainted with adversity and affliction, till Satan began

gan to pursue him ; but dwelt at ease , and in prosperity *Job. 16: 12. I was at ease, but He hath broken me asunder.*

3. Some possibly will look upon their case as sad and singular, because the Crosse, under which they stand , seemeth so heavy , that they see not how they shall be able to stand under it. As if, forsooth, every one almost were not ready to say the same; How few are there , who look upon their own Affliction , as the lightest and easiest ? *David* told us , *Psal. 6: vers. 3* that *his Soul was sore vexed* and *Psal. 55: vers. 4* that *his heart was sore pained within him.* Was not the *Israelites* case in *Egypt* hard, when their *lives were made bitter with hard bondage Exod 1: 14.* and they were made to sigh by reason of the bondage *Exod. 2: 21*? Was it not sad with *Paul* and his *Companions* , when he saith , *they were pressed out of measure , and above strength, in so much , that they despaired even of life 2 Cor. 1: v. 8.* We hear of some, who have come out of great Tribulation , *Revelation 7: v. 14.*

4. Some possible will account their condition singular, in that it is not with one or two rodes, that they are chastened, but with many , and with several sorts , their Affliction is complicated , and many are twisted together ; whence they are ready to say ,
That

That none was ever so visited and afflicted, as they are. But the case of *Job* is enough to confute this mistake. Hath God taken away thy goods, and made thee of a rich man, a poorman? So did He to *Job*, whose riches were great; for he had Seven Thousand Sheep, Three Thousand Camels, Five Hundred Yoke of Oxen, Five Hundred She Asses *Job. 1: vers. 3.* Hath God taken away thy pleasant Children, in whom thou tookest delight? So did He take away *Job's* Seven Sons and Three Daughters, and that in one houre, and that by an unusual manner, he neither seeing them die, nor getting one word of them, before they died. Read his book, and see what a multitude of evils came upon him at once. See a short summe Chap. 19: vers. 8, ——— 21. *He hath fenced up my way, that I cannot passe, and He hath set darkness in my Paths, He hath stript me of my glory, and taken the Crown from my Head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, and mine hope hath He removed, like a tree. He hath also kindled His wrath against me, and He counteth me unto Him, as one of His Enemies. His Troups come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my Tabernacle. He hath put my Brethren far from me, and mine acquaint since are verily estranged from me. My Kinsfolk have failed,*
and

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and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and mine maidens account me for a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant and he gave me no answer, I intreated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to my wife: though I intreated for the Childrens sake of mine own body. Yea young Children despised me: I arose, and they spoke against me. All my inward friends abhorred me, and they whom I loved are turned against me. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh; and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. Paul 2 Cor. 6: 4 5, 8, 9, 10. giveth us a catalogue of calamities of various kindes, that he and others did meet with: such as, *Afflictions, Necessities, Distresses, Stripes, Imprisonments, Tumults, Labours, Watchings, Fasting, Dishonour, Evil reports, accounted Deceivers, Unknown, Dying, Chastned, Sorrowful, Poor and having nothing.* And againe he giveth us an account of what befell himself, 2 Cor. II. vers. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. —

In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft; of the jewes five times received I forty stripes save one; Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned; Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the depth; in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own country-men, in perils by the Heathen, in perils

been so, or worse afflicted. 165

in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false Brethren, in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness &c. Who can say, that his condition runneth parallel with this? And if not, have they any cause to complaine, and cry out, never man was so hardly dealt with, as they are? See also what hardships those did undergo, of whom we read *Hebr. II. vers. 36; 37, 38.* They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and Imprisonments, they were sawne asunder, were tempted, were slaine with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, &c. Can they say, that they are more hardly dealt with, than these were? If not, is not their complaint very groundless?

5. Some possibly will account their case singular, in that afflictions attend them, as the shadow doth the body; where ever they be, and whithersoever they go, Crosses, Troubles and Temptations are their constant Companions. But do they verily think, that none before them, hath had as good cause to speak thus, as they? Sure, the Catalogue of calamities, that *Paul* reckoned up, as we heard lately, saith, he had such a lot, before them, He met with
trouble

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trouble both by sea and land, in cities, in wildernesses, by his own countrey-men, by strangers, and by false Brethren; in some places was he scourged, in some places beaten with rods, in some places stoned, in some places imprisoned &c. so that a short view of his life will put this beyond question. And himself said *Act. 20. 23.* that *in every citie bonds and afflictions did abide him.*

6. Some may possibly think, that their sufferings are so much the sadder, that they reach not their goods, but their good name, and credite, and that without all colour of ground. Yet, for as heavy as this appeareth to be; it is no new or uncouth thing. It is true, it may prove sad to some, who are tender of their name and credite, and would glory thereof; but how sad so ever it be to them, they must not say, that their case, as to this, is singular. *Woe to you* (said Christ to his Disciples and followers *Luk. 6. vers 26.*) *When all men speak well of you; for so did their Fathers unto the false Prophets.* And againe, *Mat. 5. vers. 11, 22.* *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, ——— And shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glade; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets,*

been so, or worse afflicted. 167

phets, which were before you. So that this was the common lot of the Prophets, & was to be the lot of the Apostles, & accordingly Paul tels us, 1 Cor. 4. vers. 9, 11, 12, 13.

———— That they were made a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels, and to men; and he addeth, Even unto this present heure, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no certaine dwelling place, and labour working with our own hands; being reviled, we blesse; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, to this day. Was not here a suffering of an high degree, both in body and in name? So 2 Cor. 6. vers. 8. As deceivers, and yet true. So were they accounted, the chiefe of Traitors, such as turned the world upside down Act. 17. vers. 6. He was accounted, the man, that taught all men every where against the People, and the Law, and the Temple Act. 21. vers. 28. Elijah was called the Troubler of Israel 1 King 18. vers. 17. We heard above, how Christ himself suffered in His Name. So that this must be no rare or uncouth thing.

7. It may be an heavy affliction to some, possibly, to be persecuted by their own Countrey-men, Neighbours, and Relations. But was not Christ so? was not
Paul

Pau! so exercised 2 Cor. 11. vers. 26. Were not the *Theſſalonians* ſo afflicted 1 *Theſ.* 2: vers. 14? Knew not *David* this in experience *Pſal* 55. vers. 12, 13. And *Job* alſo, when not only his Friends and domeſtick Servants & neighbours carried ſo unfriendly and untenderly with him; but even his own wife, that lay in his boſome, had no other conſolatory counſel to give him, but to take his leave or laſt good night (as we ſay) of God, and ſo be deſtroyed out of hand; for thus the ſentence may be interpreted, which in the Original is, *bleſſe God and die*; as we uſe to bleſſe, or wiſh well to them, of whom we are taking our leave; and ſo this *benedicere*, is, as it were, *valedicere*: Her ſaying *bleſſe* was as much, as if ſhe had ſaid, *Bid Him fare well*.

8. Some may think their croſſe heavy upon this conſideration, that they have to do with men, who know no Juſtice, and walk not either by Law, or Equity; but do what they pleaſe. But neither is this any ſtrange thing; for not to ſpeak of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who was thus dealt with; what Law or Juſtice did *John Baptiſt* meet with, when upon the deſire of a light dancing Damaſel, his head was cut off in priſon, without ſo much as a forme of proceſs? What Law or equity acted the confuſed
rabble

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rabble, that rose up against *Paul*, at *Ephesus Act. 19*? By what Law was he and *Silas* beaten openly and uncondemned at *Philippi Act. 16. vers. 22, 23, 37*? By what colour of law, was he drawn out of the Temple, and almost killed by the Jewes *Act 21*?

9. If it adde to the griefe of any, when they consider, that such as persecute and oppose them, are not openly profane, and wicked Persons; but such as are accounted good and sober persons; and such as may be judged to have the grace of God in them: It would be remembered, that howbeit this indeed be a sad Ingredient in the cup of affliction, & may make the trouble heavier, than otherwise it would be; yet it is no uncouth thing: *Job's* friends were good, sober, understanding Persons, though in a great mistake as to the application of their discourse unto *Job's* state. *Paul* did meet with some thing like this *Act. 13. vers. 30.* at *Antioch*, when the jewes stirred up devout and honourable women against him. The false Teachers, that on all occasions opposed *Paul*, were not profane-wicked Persons; for they had transformed themselves into the Apostles of Christ *2 Cor. 11: vers. 13.* We read also of some, that preached Christ of envy and contention, supposing thereby to adde affliction

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unto

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unto Paul's bonds. *Phil. 1. vers. 15, 16.*

10. Some may possibly think much to be put to open shame, and made a gazing stock, and to be exposed to open contempt, and ludibrie; and indeed, that may be a sad affliction to some noble and generous spirit, and heavier than death it self. But yet it is no strange thing; for we read of some *Hebr. 10. vers. 33.* who were theaterized, brought to open scaffolds, and put on pillories, and made publick spectacles, and exposed to open mockery. So *Hebr. 11. vers. 36.* some had *trial of cruel mockings*: Was not *Iob* made a by-word of the people, and their song *Iob 17: 6.* and *30. vers. 9.*

Several other things of this nature might be named, but I shall haste unto the *third* particular, and shew, how little ground there would be for such complaints and outcries, if all were known and rightly considered: and to this end I shall mention these particulars.

1. When *Peter* is writting to a scattered company, living as strangers, in a strange land, he saith unto them *1 Pet. 4. vers. 12.* *Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing hapned unto you.* Though they were

were scattered thorow many Countreyes, and were to meet with trials, yea and fierie trials; yet he would not have them troubled thereat, or look upon it, as any uncouth accident, befalling them: teaching us thereby to look otherwayes upon the sharpest of trials and exercises, that we meet with, than we readily do; and not to think, that we are worse dealt with, than others, or that God taketh some uncouth un-heard-of course with us.

2. What if it be found, after impartial trial, that there have been many, who have drunk deeper, by many degrees, of the cup, than they have done; and that their affliction, under which they groan and cry-out so much, is nothing comparable to what others of the Lord's worthies have been exercised with? Will not this appear by an impartial view of the Instances adduced? And seeing their crosse is light, in comparison of what some dear to the Lord have had, is there or can there be any ground for their so complaining?

3. Will it not be found, that such as complaine thus, dar not compare themselves with others, who have been as sore afflicted, if not sorer, than they, as to Grace, Sanctification, Communion with

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God &c? Will they arrogat to themselves that honourable Epithet, which the Lord gave *David*, a Man according to God's own heart; or *Job*, a perfect man and upright, and one that feared God, and eshewed evil? And if not, is there ground for their complaint, when God is dealing no worse with them, than He did with those, yea is dealing with them in a far more gentle manner?

4. What if it be found, that such as have been visited with the same affliction, with which they are visited, and under which they groan so much, have not provoked the Lord, so much as they have done? And will not their complainings then be found most unreasonable and groundless?

5. What if it be found also true & undeniable, that those who have met with the same calamities, have been more usefull in their generation, than they are, or ever were? If God spare not the green tree, shall the drye tree, that is sapless and barren, doing little more than cumbering the ground, complaine, that it is cut down? We should be content with the same lot, that both the Prophets and Apostles had. It needed not grieve the
Philip.

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Philippians, that they had the same conflict, which they saw in *Paul*, and heard to be in him. *Phil. i. last.*

The *last* particular, is to shew a better way of improving the example of others, who have been afflicted before us, than to take occasion therefrom to complaine of God's dealing, as if it were worse with us, than with them: *to wit*, to be considering their Christian carriage under their afflictions, that we may be ashamed of our deportment, and may be stirred up to follow their example, in what is truly commendable, and is for that end held forth to us in Scripture: many particulars of this kind might be mentioned, we shall name only a few.

I. We finde them patient under the crosse, and their instance proposed to us for imitation, in this respect: So saith the Apostle *James Cap. 5. vers. 10, 11. Take, my Brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we account them happy which endure; yee have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* If the carriage of the Prophets under the crosse, and particularly

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larly of *Job*, were narrowly searched, it would be found, that there was sometime too much Impatience, but the Spirit of the Lord would not have us poreing upon that, but to take special notice of their patience; and in this, to look upon them, as a copie, set before us; for albeit there was much Impatience to be observed in *Job's* carriage; yet his Patience is taken notice of by the Spirit of God, and we are bidden look to that, as if we had never heard of one of his impatient expressions.

2. We finde them looking especially to God's hand in the matter, and overlooking all Instruments, adoring and reverencing the holy Providence and Disposal of God, laying their hand upon their mouth, and giving God the glory: and in this we should study to be followers of them. *David* said *Psal. 39. vers. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it:* And when *Shimei* railed upon him, and cursed, he said, *let him curse, for the Lord hath said unto him, curse David,* and *Job* said, the Lord hath given and taken, blessed be His name.

3. We finde them following their duty, notwithstanding of all the trouble and calamity,

lamity which they did meet with; *Paul*, notwithstanding of all that beset him, went on, and minded his work; when he was persecuted in one place, he went to another, and there preached the Gospel: And in this we should follow them; for, for this end, are these things left on record.

4. We finde them so far from fretting and repineing at the Lord's Dispensations with them, in suffering wicked instruments to afflict them and persecute them, for righteousness; that they therein rejoice, as the Apostles did *Act. 5. vers. 41.* And *Paul* glorified in these his infirmities *2 Cor. 12.* And it is commendable to follow them here.

5. We finde them likewise, notwithstanding of all their Sufferings, standing fast in the faith, adhereing to their principles, refusing deliverance upon any sinful or base termes. *Heb. 11. vers. 35.* *Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection:* And it were good, if we were considering them to this end, that in this we might follow their footsteps.

6. We finde them acting faith on God, in the mean time, *Heman Psal. 88.* was in

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a very sad case, yet for all that was come upon him, he would not quite his interest in God; but beginneth that sad *Psal.* thus, *O Lord God of my salvation.* So did *Job* likewise act faith on God, *Chap. 19.*

7. We finde them exercising Hop, for as desperat-like as their case would seem to be; as *David Psal. 38.* the beginning whereof sheweth that his case was then very sad; yet *V. 15,* he crieth out, *In the Lord do I hope.*

8. We finde them taking with their iniquity, whereby they provoked God, to deal so with them, or desirous to understand what is the ground of God's controversie: so the Church *Mica. 7. vers. 9.* *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* See likewise *Lam. 3. vers. 39, 42.* And *Job* said, *Chip. 10. ver. 2.* *I will say unto God, do not condemne me; shew me, wherefore thou contendest with me.*

If we were thus taking notice of the commendable deportment of other worthies, when they were in Afflictions, to the provoking of our selves unto the like carriage, we would finde it a more profitable exercise, than to be, in our mindes, aggravating our lot, beyond the
lot

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lot of those before us, and imagining that God dealeth worse with us, than He hath done with others, before us.

CONSIDERATION. XV.

Suffering Christianly is a special gift of God.

MAny look upon Suffering for the Name of Christ, with an evil eye, and with prejudice; and because of the misapprehensions they have of it, they cannot comply with it; whereas a right view of it would make it less terrible, yea more lovely and desireable. The Apostle, writting to the *Philippians Chap. I. vers. 29.* giveth them ground to think well of the cross of Christ, when he said, *for unto you it is given, in the behalfe of Christ, not only to beleewe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.* He had been exhorting them, in the foregoing *Verses*; that they would stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing be terrified by their adversaries: and after he had told them;
H 5 that

that the opposition of the adversaries was an evident token to them of Perdition, & that their own standing & withstanding was an evident token to themselves of Salvation, and that of God; He subjoineth this ground of encouragment; that it was granted unto them, as a special favour, and that in the behalfe of Christ, not only to beleeve on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. In which words, these *Three* Particulars are chiefly considerable, in order to our present designe.

1. That suffering, for the sake of Christ, is a special gift of God, and not a thing that meer natural Strength and Courage can reach.

2. That it is a gift purchased by Christ, and given on His behalfe, or for His sake; and not for any thing in us.

3. That it is a gift, in some respect, beyond that excellent gift of faith.

But before I speak particularly to these points, I shall premit these *three* things considerable.

1. Though to bear any crosse, or crossing dispensation, outward or inward; in a christian acceptable manner, be beyond the power of nature, and natures strength,
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and is the pure gift of God : yet here we are mainely to speak of that Trouble, Afflictions and Crosses, which the followers of Christ are put to suffer by wicked Men, and for avowing of His truth and Interest, of what measure or degree so ever it be; for, this is that which is here understood, and whereof the Apostle is speaking, as the forgoing and following *Verses* cleare.

2. Nor do we hereby understand every Trouble, that wicked persons create unto the Godly (though unto a Christian deportment, in such a case, the special grace and gift of God be required:) but of that, which is properly for the Name of Christ, for adhereing to His truth and cause: for of this doth the Apostle speak, when he mentioneth *suffering for Christs sake*.

3. Nor do we speak of Suffering here, simply considered; but of suffering, accompanied with its Christian Concomitants, or of Suffering in a Christian, humble; self denied; handsome and cleanly manner; this being the Suffering, which is to be called the gift of God; and not that, which may be undergone, upon a carnal account, and may flow from a
H. 6 carnal

carnal Principle , and be intended for some carnal end.

Having premised these things , we come to speak to the *first* point , and shew , That suffering in a Christian manner , for the Name of Christ , is the meer gift of God , and beyond the reach of all natural Strength and Courage : Which will be sufficiently clear , if we but take a view of such particulars , as are requisite unto a Christian way of suffering for Christs sake, some only of which we shall content ourselves here to name : as

I. To the end , that one suffer as a Christian , for the sake of Christ , it is requisite , that he be a Christian indeed , a *believer in Christ* indeed ; for a man in nature can act nothing , as a Christian , as wanting the divine principle of all Christian Actions : This is imported in the Text , now before us , where the gift of faith in Christ is supposed as existent , before the gift of suffering. Now it is beyond all debate with the orthodox , that to believe in Christ , and to become a Christian indeed , is beyond the reach of nature ; and the same Text here evinceth faith to be given of God ; so also is it expressly said to be the gift of God , and not of ourselves.

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Ephes. 2. 8. And therefore, this Christian suffering for the sake of Christ, must be the special gift of God.

2. Unto suffering Christianly it is requisite, not only that the sufferer be a Beleever; but also, that *faith be acting* on God, through Christ, and resting upon the promises of outgate, and of an everlasting recompence, and of throw-bearing, and the other objects of faith, necessary to be eyed, in such a day; for if this be not, even the beleever may fainte and fall backward, as we see in *Peter*: Now this present acting of faith being the gift of God, through His grace and influences, it is manifest, that Christian suffering, unto which this is requisite, must be also His gift.

3. *Hope* is also requisite unto a Christian suffering; for hereby must the sufferers head be born-up, when he is swimeing thorow the sea of Persecution; it is the Soules anchor, which must not be wanting in a storme; it is his helmet, and must not be a missing in the day of battel. Now this hope being the special gift of God, and his work: *1 Pet. 1: 3. 2 Thes. 2: vers. 13.* it is manifest, that Christian suffering, unto which this hope is so necessary, must be His special gift.

4. *Patience* is likewise hereunto requisite, for without it; there will be nothing but wearying; fainting, fretting, repining; and sinful longing to be from under the Crosse; hence there is so great need of patience, *Heb. 10. vers. 36. Luk. 21. vers. 19. Jam. 1. vers. 4. 2 Pet. 1. vers. 6.* And it is so much pressed *Jam. 5. v. 10, 11. 1 Tim. 6: 11.* And commended *1 Thes. 1. vers. 3. 2 Thes. 1. vers. 4. Revel. 2: 2, 9.* Now this patience is not the work of nature, but His work, who is the God of all patience *Rom. 15. vers. 5.* And therefore Christian suffering must be His work and gift also.

5. *Humble submission and calmness of spirit* is also requisite unto a right way of suffering; for a proud, haughty, unquiet and undaunted spirit, will never take a right lift of the crosse: and this must also be wrought by the free and powerful grace of God, and must be of Him, from whom every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down; even of the Father of lights *Jam. 1: 17.* And therefore, Christian suffering, unto which this is so requisite, must be of Him also.

6. Such, as will suffer Christianly for Christ, must have *Courage, Boldness, and Christian*:

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Christian Resolution ; as accounting it their glory and honour to suffer for His sake , and as remembering , that as , on the one hand , their cheerful , couragious and valiant suffering for the Interest of Jesus , is no small encouragment to others to adhere to Him , and to His cause ; so , upon the other hand , to suffer discourag-edly , and with a fainting heart , is no small disadvantage to the cause , Enemies be-ing thereby more hardened , and friends discouraged. And this Courage and fixed Resolution must only be had from God , Nature will not founnish this. They must *be strong in the Lord , and in the power of His might Ephes. 6. vers. 10.* And as this is from the Lord alone , so must the grace of Suffering Christianly be.

7. He , who would suffer as a Christian , must have his Conscience sprinkled , God must be pacified , all quarrels must be taken out of the way ; for the sense and apprehension of an angrie God , and sin and guilt looking the man in the face , will much dash , discourage and fainte him , in his sufferings , Now it is unquestionable , that God's manifesting himself satisfied and well pleased with the man , is His own free gift ; it is His proper work
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to sprinkle consciences from dead works ; and so must this Christian suffering be from Him , which dependeth here-upon.

8. When one is questioned for the Cause of Christ , before learned and able States-men and Politicians , or before learned Church-men , he will have need of something , wherewith to answer his Accusers ; and so be in case to give a glorious Testimony to the Truth , and the cause of Christ , otherwise the adversaries will think , they have cause to triumph , when he is made speechless (though that Christian Martyr-woman , who said , *she could not dispute for Christ , but she could burn for Him* , did sufficiently refell all the Arguments of her Adversaries , which were but meer Sophismes) especially if the maine crime be coloured-over with some alleiged personal fault ; In this , or the like cases , it is necessary , that the accused have pertinent , clear and pungent reasons of his actions , in readiness , whether to refell what is falsely alleiged ; or to defend what is just and righteous. Now whence shall this be had , or from whom is it to be expected , but from Him , who hath promised that it shall be given them ,

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in that hour *Mat. 10. vers. 19.* But when they deliver you up, take no thought, how, or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you, in that same houre, what ye shall speak. And therefore Christian suffering, unto which this is so necessary, must be given of God also.

9. Such as are suffering for Christ's sake, had need to be very fixed, stayed, and stedfast, in adhering to their Principles, as unshaken with any winde of temptation; for cedeing and yeelding, in matters of a Testimony, dishonoureth the Lord, whose truth is questioned; encourageth and confirmeth Enemies, and stumbleth and marreth the confidence of others; therefore such as would suffer aright, must stand to the truth, and not yeeld in an hooft, nor sell or give away the least point of truth. And this fixed, and stedfast adhering to the truth, is of God alone. *He who stablisheth us in Christ, is God 2 Cor. 1. vers. 21.* And when Paul is pressing the *Thessalonians* to stand fast *2 Thes. 2. vers. 15.* He addeth *Vers. 16, 17.* Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our father ——— Comfort your hearts, and stablish you, in every good word and work. And.

And therefore so must the Christian suffering be of Him alone.

10. A Christian sufferer for Christ must have a Christian love to Christ; for it is this that maketh the sufferers not count their life dear to the death for Christ, and maketh them hazard all for Him; they love him better, than they love Father, or Mother, or any thing else in a world, and therefore are content to lose all for Him, and His sake. Now, love is of God, who is love. *1 Joh. 4. vers. 7, 8.* And it is one of the fruites of the Spirit *Gal. 5. vers. 22.* And must be from the God of all grace; for we love Him, because He first loved us *1 Joh. 4. vers. 19.* And therefore so must this right suffering be from Him.

11. Before one can suffer aright for Christ, and His cause, he must be dead and mortified to this world, and to all the Riches, Honours and Pleasures, to the lust of the eye, to the lust of the flesh, and to the pride of life, as *Iohn* speaketh *1 Ioh. 2: 16.* Yea he must be dead to himself, and to his own life, otherwayes these will hang as weights upon him, and hinder his swimeing through the sea of affliction and persecution. Now this self denial

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denial being the singular gift of God, suffering, unto which it is so necessary, must be His peculiar gift also.

12. Unto Christian Suffering for the sake of Christ, it is necessarily requisite, that the Sufferer have fresh Influences from the Spirit of God, to stirre up the graces of God in him, and to carry him thorow; for if these be withheld, a very *Peter* will sinfully and shamefully deny his Master: now, it is unquestionable that these Influences must needs flow from the fountaine, and be the effects of Gods grace and love; and therefore so must Christian suffering be, which cannot be without these.

By these particulars the *first* point is clear: And as for the *Second Viz.* That this gift of suffering is purchased by Christ, is a fruit of His death, and is obtained for His sake, and bestowed in His behalfe. *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ to suffer,* we need not insist upon it, seing it is certaine, and undeniable, that every gift of this kind, and every spiritual grace, is purchased to us by the bloud and merites of Christ; He laid down His life to purchase heaven to His own, and every thing else, that was needful for them, in the way

way to heaven. In Christ are we blessed with all spiritual blessings, in celestials *Ephes. 1. vers. 3.* Every spiritual blessing cometh to us, in and through the Covenant of Grace, and of this Covenant Christ is the Mediator; so that every blessing of the Covenant is purchased by Him. This is also manifest from what was said, in confirmation of the former Point; for all these favours, requisite unto a Christian suffering, as the grace of Faith, Hop, Courage, Stedfastness, Patience; Humility &c. are purchased to us by Christ; and consequently so must this gift of Christian suffering be purchased also.

The *third* point followeth, *to wit*; That this gift of Suffering Christianly for the sake of Christ, is a gift, in some respect, beyond faith: for the Apostle saith. It was given to these *Philippians*, *not onely to beleieve, but also to suffer*, which expression, *not only, but also*, importeth a sort of gradation, and giveth some eminency and excellency unto the last; as *Joh. 5: vers. 18.* and *13. vers. 9.* *Act. 19. vers. 27.* and *21. vers. 13.* *Rom. 5. vers. 3, 11.* and *8. vers. 23.* and *13: 5.* *2 Cor. 7: 7.* and *8: 10.* *Ephes. 1. vers. 21.* and else where. We shall

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shall clear this further, by mentioning some particulars.

1. This Christian-suffering for the cause of Christ, doth presuppose Faith, as we said above; and so must be a gift given, over and above faith.

2. Many have the gift of faith, who never receive this gift of suffering; many precious beleivers go to their grave in peace, and know not what it is to die for witnessing to the Name of Jesus, on a scaffold, or to suffer at the hands of Persecuters, upon that account. It is reported of famous *Luther*, that he oft wished and praied for this; and yet God thought fit, he should die on his bed in peace. This gift then of suffering, not being common to all, to whom faith is common, must have some peculiar excellency, as being more rare.

3. Yea even all those beleivers, who are called to suffer for the cause of Christ, cannot alwayes win to this gift of Christian & Valiant Suffering for the sake of Christ, but through temptation and carnal fear over-powering them, may for a time shrink, cede and fainte, and thus wrong their own peace, harden the Adversaries, discourage the Godly, wrong the Cause,
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and dishonour the Lord ; as we see in *Peter* , when he denied his Master , and that with Curses and Execrations , whose faith yet failed not , the Lord having prayed for that *Luk. 22: 32.*

4. Though it be a matter of no small , difficulty to beleeve ; yet some may win over that difficulty , that cannot win over the difficulty of Suffering Christianly , in bearing Testimony to the truth of Jesus , as that instance of *Peter* cleareth. It being then a matter of greater difficulty to suffer aright , than to beleeve , this gift of suffering must be a greater gift.

5. Unto Suffering for the sake of Christ , in a right manner , there is requisite (as we saw above) a greater concurrence of the graces of the Spirit of God ; & a necessity also for a greater concurrence of divine Influences , to carry the soul thorough.

6. This suffering for Christ's sake hath a special piece of honour attending it : Hence the Apostles rejoiced , that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Christ *Act. 5. vers. 41.* And *Peter 1 Pet. 4. vers. 13.* desireth those , he wrote unto , to rejoyce , in that lot ; and *Paul Rom. 5. vers. 3.* saith , we glory in tribulations

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lations; yea he speaketh of this, as in some respect, a step above their *rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, Vers. 2.* for he bringeth it in, with a *not only so, but also.* Which manifestly cleareth the excellency of this gift of Suffering.

7. Christian Suffering for the Name of Christ, is a common and publick good, being edifying to the Body, and so advantageous to many: A mans faith is mainly profitable to himself, and is thereunto ordained; But Suffering in a right manner is profitable unto many; to Enemies and Persecutors it giveth a dash, and leaveth some ground of conviction; and Friends are much encouraged thereby; yea the whole Church receiveth advantage; for thereby a noble Testimony is given to the truth, and the bloud of the Martyres becometh the seed of the Church.

8. Suffering for the cause of Christ, in a Christian manner, maketh the Sufferers to be like Christ and conforme to the Captaine of their Salvation; as one now graduat, or advanced to an higher class; Christ came to bear witness to the truth, and suffered upon the account of bearing Testimony to the truth; and those, who are honoured with this special gift, are
made

made in a special manner conforme unto Him, and thus are greatly honoured.

9. As Sufferers for the cause of Christ are thereby advanced to great honour and dignity, so are they usually admitted to great nearness and access to God; the Lord loveth to let out of himself unto them, in a special manner: that is a confirming expression, which we have 1 Pet. 4: 14. *If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you.* Sufferers have, even here, an happiness, and an happiness upon the account of their suffering (were it but) reproach, for the Name of Christ; and who can tell how rich and great this happiness is, and wherein it consisteth? The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them; this Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of glory, working in them all His glorious graces, whereby He prepareth them for glory, and comforteth their souls, as if they were in the suburbs of glory, resideth in them, and resteth upon them, as the sure earnest of glory: wherefore this Suffering for His Name must be a great matter.

10. This Christian suffering for the Name of Christ maketh way for a greater degree

degree in Glory : *If we suffer with Him we shall also reigne with Him*, 2 Tim. 2: vers. 12. *If we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified together*, Rom. 8: vers. 17. There is a noble word to this purpose 2 Cor. 4: vers. 17. *For our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* The Glory, that our momentany Affliction worketh for us, is eternal, and the Weight of that Crown is eternally Weighty, that can never be fully weighed: Nay, It cannot be told by Hyperbole's heaped upon Hyperbole's; all these will come short of expressing the Weight thereof. We finde in the Book of the Reve'. Chap. 7: vers. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. that there were some discernable from others, and more remarkable, having on a distinguishing robe, as a peculiar livery in Glory; They are said to have had *White Robs*, and who were these? Such as came out of great Tribulation. They were made to wear on earth a red livery of blood; but now in glory they are shining in white: And it is added Vers. 15. &c. *Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night, in his Temple, and He that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the Sun light on them any more, for the Lamb,*
I which

which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of Waters: And shall wipe away all teares from their eyes.

We shall now come to speak something, in order to the improvement of these Truthes, which we have confirmed.

First, The faith of these Truthes would give a check unto several evils, that we are too ready to comply with, in a day of trial, and discover unto us several things, for which we are to check and rebuke ourselves, as

1. Do not some finde an Antipathy at the cross working and striving in them, even when the Cross is yet far off? Do they not finde some averfness of soul therefrom? Now this evil would meet with a check, if these Truthes were beleaved? No beleever findeth any averfness from faith; but he is still desiring more and more of it, and praying, *Lord increase our faith*; for he knoweth how excellent and necessary it is. And now, seing the grace and gift of Suffering is, (as we have shown,) in several respects above and beyond faith, should they be unwilling to receive it, if God shall be pleased to honour them with that? Might not the beleever hence say to himself, are there any of the Gifts of God to be refused, or rejected?

Are

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Are not all His Graces and Gifts excellent and lovely? Why doth my heart then so much stand out against this? How is it, that I am not more in love with the Glorious Cross of Christ? Especially seeing it is an honour, that is not conferred on every one, and an honourable Gift, purchased by the precious blood of Christ, that hath purchased nothing that will harme us, or nothing but what is excellent and desirable? Why then am I so little in love with suffering for the sake of Christ? Ought I not to be ashamed of and displeased with my self, upon this account? Ought I not to check this averfness?

2. The faith of this would give a check unto our readiness to shift the Cross, when we are called to make ready for it, and when it seemeth to be at the door: For, would we say, what? Shall we devise meanes to shift suffering for the Cause of Christ, when He is calling us to it? What, shall we meditate a way of shifting and putting away such an honourable Divine Gift, more excellent than faith, in several respects? What unsutable & unworthy carriage must this be? Is it a gift of God, and such a gift of God, and a gift given in the behalfe of Christ, as purchased by His Merites and Death; and shall we thus sinfully, ba'e-

ly and unworthily shift it by our door; and rather sinne, than embrace it, and make it welcome? What a shame were this?

3. The faith of these things would give a check unto our fool-hardiness and too rash adventuring on sufferings, without a due call; and as if our strength were able to carry us thorow. Too many are too confident, and promise too much upon their own Ability, Parts, Resolution and Strength, as if they stood in need of no more; and as if this Suffering for the sake of Christ were not a pure gift of Grace, that must come down from above from the Father of Lights, through Jesus Christ. Now the faith of these Truthes, would check these thoughts. Any that know what true faith is would be dissatisfied with such, as would talk of it, as a thing in their power, and which they could put in Act, when they pleased, because they would know, that such boasted of what they had not; and that faith was not in their Power, but was the special and purchased gift of God. So would the right thoughts of this put us from ever thinking to venture on suffering, in our own strength, & put us to look to Him, from whom every good gift and every perfect gift

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gift cometh , through Jesus Christ , and waite on Him for it.

4. The faith of this would likewise rebuke our readiness to fainte , when we aer called to suffer , or engaged in it ; and put a check to our saying : Alas , we will never win thorow this Sea of Affliction , one day or other , we shall shamefully fall , and betray the cause , and so come off with disgrace ; and would put us to look off ourselves , and to look up unto the giver , who giveth freely : and to the Purchaser , who will receive all that He hath purchased. Must we not thus carry , in order to faith , when we beginne to feare , that it shall fail us ; Do we not comfort ourselves with this , That faith is the free gift of God , and is purchased by Christ , and is not of ourselves ? And why should we not do so , in order to suffering , which is also the free gift of God , and is purchased by Christ ? When we are like to be discouraged with the thoughts of our own weakness , and unfitness to contend with Horsemen , and with the swellings of Jordan ; should we not look upon it , as the gift of God , whereby He can make us strong , even when we are weak , to the Glory of His free Grace ? And when we are discouraged with the thoughts of our unworthiness , and thereupon inferre , that

God will never honour us, with bearing faithful Testimony unto His Truth; should we not, in humility and in the acknowledgment of our own Unworthiness, and Provocations, look to Him, as the great and free giver, who giveth nothing because of our merites: He gave us faith freely, notwithstanding of our former Provocations and great unworthiness; and may He not also give us this gift, when He calleth us to the duty, freely through Jesus, the great Purchaser?

5. The faith of this would give a check to that humore, whereby some are ready to sacrifice to their own net, and to burn incense to their own drag; that is, to be puffed up, and vainly proud of their carriage, when they have been helped to carry honestly in a day of trial, as if they by their wit and courage had done it, or as if it had not been given them, in that houre: what would such have to be proud of, who believed, that this grace was freely given to them, and that, in the behalfe of Christ? And who saw, that if it had not been so, they had never been able to have endured the storme; Would not they see cause to say, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto God be Glory;*

Secondly, From these Truthes, we may be

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be informed of several things, the knowledge of which may be useful, in an evil day: As

1. We may hence be convinced of the difficulty of Suffering Christianly, for the Cause of Christ: It is not Natural Courage, Stoutness, or Fear of Shame, or the like, that will be able to carry thorow: No, no, A Divine purchased Grace and Gift must be had, or there will be no standing. Many, in a calme day, may think it no great matter to suffer upon Christ's account, and may seem very resolute, willing and ready to suffer; but when the storme beginneth to blow to purpose, and they are put to it, they finde it some other thing. than they imagined: And what wonder? It is not a thing that Nature can command, nor Natural Strength and Courage can enable for: but Divine Help is required thereunto. It must be given, and given in Christ: and this faith, there is no small difficulty in it.

2. We may hence see a fundamental Reason, why some are honoured with suffering for the Cause of Christ, and others not; It is the free gift of God, and purchased by Christ, and so is bestowed onely on those, for whom it is purchased, and on whom free grace will bestow it. As also, whence it

cometh to passe, that of two, who are both called to witnesses to the truth by suffering, one is honourably helped thorow, the other fainteth. The one hath gotte the free gift, the other not: It is true, other provoking causes may come here into consideration, as bringing this on; but yet this is principally to be considered, our sins may provoke the Lord to withhold this gift; and when it is not given, there will be no suffering for the sake of Christ, in a Christian manner.

3. We may hence be informed concerning the ground of this honour being bestowed upon any: It is not for their eminency of parts, or worth, or any such thing in them; but purely of free grace, and on the behalfe of Christ.

Thirdly, Upon the ground of these Truthes, we may read severall Duties, called for at our hands, in a day of Suffering. As

1. In such a day, when stormes are at hand, we should not be troubled with perplexity and anxiety of Spirit; nor disquiet or discourage ourselves with feares and apprehensions; that we shall fainte in the day of Adversity, and shall not be in case to stand stedfast in the storme: For our strength and standing is not in our own hands, It is in Gods.

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Gods Hand; His gift must make us stand, and nothing else.

2. We should be looking off ourselves and all that is within us, and not think, that any thing of that kind will be able to carry us thorow; But fix our eye upon the gracious Giver, and lay hold on Christ by faith, and expect the thorow-bearing Gift and Grace, in and through Him; In such a day, we would do well to renounce all within us; that we may not lean to it, and so betake ourselves alone to the fountaine of free grace, and expect what is necessary in that day, from Him, who giveth freely and upbraider not.

3. And in order to this, seing this gift is bestowed only in and through Christ, we should study before hand, to get our Interest in Christ made up, that so we may have ground to expect a grant of this gift for His sake; for none else can expect this, but such as are reconciled to God through Christ.

3. We would also labour to be in good termes with God, and to be keeping our Conscience void of offence both before God and Man, lest He be provoked to withhold this gift from us. When we have been walking neer God, and keeping carefully Communion with Him,

we may go to Him with the greater Confidence and Boldness, and ask this gift, through Christ.

Fourthly, We may hence see, what Duties we are especially called to, in the day, when we are actually and particularly called to bear witness to the Truth, and to suffer upon the account thereof. As

1. We should make the Cross of Christ welcome, because it is Gods send; all that God sendeth should be welcome; This is a special Gift, and a purchased Gift; and therefore it should be heartily embraced, both because of the Giver, and because of the Purchaser. It is true, flesh and blood have no will of Suffering, nature is averse from it; yet Spiritual Reason and Grace should say, God will give me nothing on the behalfe of Christ, but what is good and necessary for me; and seeing Suffering for Christs sake is of that nature; and is so excellent a Gift, beyond faith it self, in so many respects, why should I storme? Why should I quarrel upon that account? Why should I not rather embrace it with love, and give it an heartsome welcome?

2. Not only upon this account should we accept of that favour heartily and cheerfully

fully; but also we should accept thereof with Joy and Gladness, rejoicing that free grace would put that singular honour upon us: As we had cause to rejoyce, when He was pleased to single us out from many others, no worse than we were, and bestow faith upon us; so have we cause to rejoyce, in His pitching upon us, and going by many others, better than we are, in the matter of Suffering. Should we not count it all Joy, when, for Christs sake, we fall into manifold temptations, because the Lord is thereby honouring and enriching us with this rare and precious Gift? Should we not, upon this account, Glory in Tribulations, as in so many enriching gifts, freely bestowed on us of God, and purchased by Christ?

3. Hereby should we learne to beware of fretting or repineing at the trouble, that the Crosse and Testimony of Jesus bringeth with it; and choose rather to be thankful for such an honourable gift, as this Suffering for the sake of Christ is: Nay the more our trouble and harassing be, let us look upon ourselves as the more honoured of God; and therefore called to be thankful and to bleis; seing we should blesse Him, for all His Benefites; and this is among the chiefe of His benefites.

4. We should then be wholly dead to ourselves, and to any stock of strength or courage, that we may imagine to be in us; that we may not think of standing upon our own legs; for these will fail us: And should fix our eye on this Father of Lights, from whom every good gift must come; and by faith depend upon Him, and seek this from Him, in prayer through faith. We have encouragement now to go to God, through Jesus, to seek this gift, because it is a gift, and because it is a gift purchased by Christ.

5. And especially should this be our exercise, when at any time, we finde our heart like to fainte, and our strength like to faill us, and we are like to sinck. Then should we double our suites, and renew our acts of Faith, upon the ground of Christs Purchase, and the Fathers Grace and Readiness to bestow what we need, and cannot now want, of His own Free Grace, and good Will.

Lastly, There is here a sure ground of great Comfort laid down; and this is the plain scope of the words; for the Apostle is comforting these Christians of the Church of *Philippi*, against the Crosse, with this, (among others) that to suffer for Christ's sake was a gift of God, and a gift bestowed upon

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upon them through Jesus Christ : So that there is here comfort against many Discouragements As

1. Against the thoughts of the greatness of the difficulty : we are ready to cry out ; Oh we cannot wrestle thorow this Cross, wherein are so many difficulties , and each more insuperable than another : But this may comfort us. That there is a gift of God for it, which will make all difficulties superable : we of ourselves, as of ourselves, cannot wrestle thorow ; but this gift can enable ; and that there is nothing called for at our hands, but what this gift will enable us to do : this gift will bear all our Charges, and keep our heads above, when swimming thorow the most dangerous Seas,

2. This may comfort against the thoughts of Rageing, Strong and Cruel Adversaries; for this gift will enable ; if it be given to Suffer , we shall be helped to Suffer all their Rage and Cruelty , and not fear , or fainte.

3. It may comfort us against the thoughts of our own weakness : we are but like a reed shaken in the winde , and cannot endure much : Yet as when the gift of faith was given all our corruption and unbeleefe, and all the Power of Satan could not hinder

our closeing with Christ; so, when this Gift of Suffering is bestowed, through Jesus Christ, all our inward weakness and averfness shall not hinder our through-bearing: We shall then go in the strength of that gift, without wearying or fainting; for we shall then be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of His Might.

4. It may Comfort against the apprehensions of our own sinfulness and great unworthiness, whereby we may fear, that He shall forsake us, because of our provocations, and not helpe us thorow: For this being the gift of God, and given in the behalfe of Christ, we cannot think, that it can be given for any worth in us: What ever our sins be, we may look to Him, when we are called to bear witness to His Truth, who is a great and a free Giver, and have hope that He will make us Partakers of that free Gift, in and through Christ. Beggars look for a free almes, though they can plead nothing but poverty and want; and are far from pleading their own worth and merites: He gave us faith, at first, which we neither did, nor could merite; and why may He not also give us this gift, when He calleth us to the duty?

5. It may comfort against the faintings of others, whom we apprehend to have been

been more able to ride thorow the storme, than we are: We are ready to say, How can such as I am stand, when the like of Peter fainted so foulely? But this is comfortable, that it is not any stock of Grace, or inward Strength, Resolution and natural Courage, or the like, that will carry thorow; but the gift of God; and without this gift of God, the strongest will not stand; and with it, the weakest will be enabled to stand-out the trial: And when God denieth this for a time unto strong Christians, for His own Holy Ends, He may give it to the weak, and so carry them thorow; that all may see, it is His gift that doth the thing, and nothing else.

6. This may also comfort us, against the thoughts of our unpreparedness to meet with the trial; for the matter of our throw-bearing dependeth not upon our fitness, and preparation for the Exercise; but upon the Gift of God; and this gift will be more glorious and excellent in their eyes, who knowing themselves to have been very far out of case, for such a trial, were yet enabled by vertue of that gift to stand, and to suffer for the sake of Christ.

7. So it may comfort against the sorrowful thoughts of their former Miscarriages, Faintings and sinful Shunnings of a faithful
Testi-

Testimony, which may readily cause such apprehend, that the Lord will stand by them no more, but forsake them, as they did formerly forsake Him: This, I say, may comfort them, that it is a gift, and a gift of God, and a gift, purchased by the blood of Jesus, by which they must be helped; and what is of that nature, may be given, notwithstanding of all that hath past; all Gods gifts being free, and the more unworthy they be, on whom they are bestowed, the glory of free grace shineth forth the more, and the worth and value of the Merits of Christ is more conspicuous.

CONSIDERATION. XVI.

The Sufferings of Christs Servants are for the advantage of the Church.

When persecution ariseth especially against Christs eminent Servants and Followers, then many are ready to draw strange Conclusions, in their own minds, touching the Church: and to think that the Church shall be utterly extirpated; little considering the wonderful Workings of God,

God, who, by that meane, which, to them, threa'neth ruine, is bringing about the welfare and advantage of the Church, to the Glory of His Power and Wisdom. Whereas if it were beleev'd, that even by persecution, raised against the Preachers and eminent Professours, the Church should be no lo'er, the thoughts of such a Dispensation could not cause much consternation.

In order to the speaking a few words unto this, we would take notice of a few Instances, which will confirme the truth thereof. *Act. 8: vers. 1.* It is said, *that at that time, there was a great persecution against the Church, which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered abroad throughout the Regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles; that is, all the Church-Officers were forced to flee, after Stephen was stoned. But did this any harme to the Church? No; but did tend rather to the furtherance of the Gospel; for it is added vers. 4. Therefore they that were scattered went every where, preaching the word; so that by this meanes, the Gospel was spread throughout the Regions about, and that more quickly, than otherwayes, in all probability, it would have been. When Paul is speaking of his Sufferings Co'. 1: 24. he saith, they were for them, and not so only,*
but

but for the whole body, the Church. Who now rejoyce in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behinde of the afflictions of Christ, in my flesh for his bodies sake, which is the Church. So 2 Cor. 1: 6. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your Consolation and Salvation, 2 Tim. 2: 10. Therefore I endure all things for the Elects sake. Another plaine Instance we have Phil. 1: 12. But I would, ye should understand, Brethren, that the things, which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.

1. For further clearing up of this, we shall mention some particular Advantages, which the Church reapeth by the Sufferings of Christ's Eminent Servants and Followers.

1. Their sufferings, upon the account of Truth, serve much to Strengthen and Establish the rest of the people of God, in the faith; for the truth is thereby much confirmed unto them, and made to have some deeper Impression in their hearts, when they see, that the Truthes, which those Servants of Christ delivered unto them, were such, as the Preachers themselves were perswaded of, as truthes, and as weighty truthes; yea and such, as they are ready to seal with their blood. It is for this cause, that Paul maketh mention
of

of his sufferings, in that Epistle to the *Colossians*; for he is endeavouring to settle them in the faith, and to keep them stedfast in the day of Temptation. He would have them *vers. 23. Continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.* And because they might have said, what can we do, when you are put to such sufferings, and are shut up in Prison? He obviateth this by saying, *I rejoyce in my sufferings for you.* As if he had said, My Imprisonment and Sufferings are not to your disadvantage, but for your good; and upon that account I rejoyce in them. So that this is a notable mean to keep others stedfast in the truth: As, upon the other hand, it is a potent and forcible mean to shake poor people out of their hopes, and to confirme many in Atheisme and Infidelity, when they see such, as have been preaching forth truthes unto them, refusing to stand to them, and avow them, in a day of Temptation: Hence is it, that Satan, seeing this so much for his advantage, doubleth the force of his Temptations and Assaults against such, knowing that the fall of one such may endanger many, and occasion the staggering of multitudes.

2. By this meanes the Gospel is made to spread

spread more, and and that not only by occasion of the banishment of Preachers; as we see *Act. 8.* but also, that by reason of their very Imprisonment or Persecution to the death, many will be made to enquire after the cause, why such are put to so hard sufferings; and after enquire, some may be made to see, that their Cause is just and righteous, howbeit they be condemned, & thus may be brought to like their cause, & befriend it, & to hate the carriage of the Persecuters: So that the Gospel-truth is no loser, by all the loss that the Preachers suffer, upon the account thereof; for when strangers observe that such men of Understanding, judgment and Conscience, are ready and willing to confirm the truth of what they assert with their blood, and to suffer any thing rather than deny the same, they beginne to search more seriously after the matter, and to consider its consequences, and come at length to affect that way more in their heart; an Instance whereof we have *Phil. 1: 12. 13.* He told them *vers. 12.* that what hardships had befallen him; had fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, and in the next *verse* he sheweth, how this was, saying, *so that my bonds in Christ are manifest, in all the Palace, and in all other places.* The report of his Imprisonment,

ment, for the Name of Christ, went far and neer; so that even *Cæsars* Court ringed againe with the noise of it, and they are talking of it among themselves; and severals are converted to the truth thereby, and brought to embrace the Gospel; for he tels us *Chap. 4: 22.* That there were Saints in *Cæsar's* household, *all the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household.*

3. When the Lords eminent Servants are persecuted upon the account of truth, the Lord is (to speak so) more engaged to do for His Church, to owne her, and to counterwork the plots and wicked devices of Satan; and this He is pleased, for the glory of His name, to declare and manifest, by making thereby the Gospel to flourish more, in power and life; and to bleſs the laboures of a few the more. The Church did never thrive better, than in the Primitive times, during these hore persecutions. In time of persecution, the Church is purer, for few adhere to the truth, but such, who have received the truth, as it is in Jesus, and have the grace of God in them in truth; then are there fewest hypocrites to be found in the Church, the heat of persecution driveth them away, and driveth the upright hearted neerer to God, so that their grace & communion with God groweth,

eth, their mortification to the things of this life increaseth, and they become more and more crucified unto the world, and the world unto them: So that howbeit the outward bulk of Professours diminish; yet the true hearted grow more lively, strong and vigorous, and the inward man is renewed day by day 2 Cor. 4: 16. So that really the Church suffereth no loss, but is a gainer.

4. By this meanes, many other faithful, zealous and honest-hearted Servants of God, are made (through the Lord's wonderful defeating of the Counsels of Satan) more bold & forward, in owning & declaring the truth: The devil thinks, by the sufferings of some eminent Servants, to discourage and faine many, as supposing that they will be affrighted from their duty; but the grace and power of God worketh out the contrary event: As we see Phil. 1: 14. where another fruit of Paul's bonds and Imprisonment is added. *And many of the Brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bondes, are much more bold to speak the word, without fear.* So that the Church is a gainer, through the Lord's wonderful working, by all these sufferings.

5. There is hereby an encouraging example laid before others: It is no small
advan-

advantage unto particular Beleevers, in a time of Persecution, to know of some precedent, of some that have gone thorow the foord before them: Therefore saith the Apostle *James Chap. 5: 10.* *Take, my Brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of Patience; so that such Examples are refreshing, and helpful unto their Constancy and Stedfastness; when they see others standing fast in the faith, in the midst of all persecutions, that they meet with, they are animated unto the like stedfastness, and to resolution, in adhering fixedly to the truth: such examples will make even a timorous man wax bold; and the exemplary carriage of sufferers is very encouraging and comfortable, wherefore the Apostle saith 2 Cor. 1: 6.* *whether we be afflicted, it is for your Consolation.* Therefore these Sufferings are much for the advantage of the Church.

6. Hereby is the Church awakened from security, and made to look out for a suffering lot; when thus it is done to the green tree, they are made to take Warning; Such a dispensation is as the sounding of the trumpet for an alarme; and this is no small advantage, when she is raised to her feet, and put in a postour, and made ready for the

the battel ; then she needeth not fear a surprisal ; but hath time to prepare, and make ready for the storme.

In order to the Improvement of this Consideration , we would

I. Beware to conclude that all is gone, when we hear or see Christs eminent Servants put to sad sufferings : We are ready to wonder why the Lord should suffer such and such things to be done ; why He should suffer such sad things to befall His eminent and useful Servants, who cannot well be missed, one whereof is worth an hundred, so that the Death or Imprisonment of one such threatneth more destruction to the Church, than the loss of many : But we know not the thoughts of the Lord ; we know not what He is designing , and what He mindeth to effectuate thereby. And if we beleev- ed , that even such a dispensation as this could do no harme to the Church ; how little would we be troubled at it ? If we saw, what an effectual way this were , in the steady , unerring Hand of God , to bring about the spiritual advantage of the Church, how would we lay our hands upon our mouth, and be silent ? And though we cannot see in particular, what advantage the Church is like to get, by the taking away of such, as were as Pillars of the Church :
Yet

Yet we should by faith rest assured, that the Head, and Husband of the Church, would not suffer such a Dispensation to come, if He knew not, how to bring good and advantage out of it; and that thereby good seed was sown, which, though accompanied with teares and blood, yet should yeeld full sheaves at length, which should be brought home with Joy.

2. We would do well to search ourselves, at such a time, to see if we, as particular members of the Church, be reaping any advantage by what we hear and see of the Sufferings of Christs eminent Servants; as for example, see if thereby the truth of the Gospel become more riveted in our souls, & we becometh more rooted in the faith and assurance thereof, and more fixed in our Resolution to adhere thereunto; See if Truth becometh lovely & desireable to us upon this account; See if grace be growing more within, and if our hearts and affections be loosed more and more from the things of a world, and we be prepared more to quite all for Christ, and His Cause; See if by the example of others we be more animated, and encouraged to avow and a-

bide by the truth, cost what it will; See if these newes be raising us out of our bed, and making us prepare for the battel, and make ready for the approaching storme: & if we finde any such advantage thereby, let us blesse Him, who is giving us meat out of the eater, and doing us good by the dear cost and charges of others.

3. This should comfort such, as are called forth to suffer for the Name of Jesus; they need not trouble themselves with thoughts, what shall become of the Church and Interest of Christ; but leave that upon the Lord; and beleieve, that He shall make it contribute to the furtherance of the Gospel, and to the enlairgment of His Kingdom; Ministers called to suffer may possibly think, Oh what shall become of the poor people? we cannot get preached unto them, as formerly; but what if God make their stedfastness in suffering more advantagious, than their preachings would have been? What if that edifie more, than many preachings did, or would do? Ought not they, upon this Consideration, rejoyce in their Lot, and suffer cheerfully, that Christs Interest may prosper more thereby? What know they, what influence their Christian carriage

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riage may have on all On-lookers, yea and on Enemies and Persecuters themselves, beside what confirmation friends may have thereby?

CONSIDERATION XVII.

The Lord Reigneth in Zion.

BEleever's are not like unto the Subjects of Kings, here on earth, who may be dethroned, and their Crowns may fall from their Heads, and the Scepters be taken out of their hands, and they may lose all the Ensignes of Royalty; and when it falleth out so (as is done many a time) Subjects have but cold Comfort, in looking to the Throne, when it hath forsaken him, that sat thereon. But Beleever's have a King, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever, and whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. It cannot then but be strange, that when Men, who have all their temporal happiness hanging upon the standing of Kings of Clay, can rejoyce in adversity, when they have any

K. 2

hope

hope of their King's recovering of his lost Throne and Kingdome, though the grounds of their Hop be most disputable and uncertaine; that the Children of God, in the day of their Adversity, can draw so little Comfort from the sure and certaine Grounds of Hope, which they have to look to. If Christs Crown and Throne were not surer, than the fading and perishing *Regalia* of Men, what would beleev-ers do? Whither could they go for consolation, in the day of their Distress and Anguish? But now, seing their King is not like the Kings of the Earth, why are they so heartless, in the day of their extremity? Sure, the Reason must be, because they beleieve not, that He is such a King, as He is indeed; or they know not how to improve, to any spiritual Advantage, such a noble Ground of Consolation, as this is. Wherefore it may be useful to speak a little unto this: And so we shall *first* lay down some *Propositions*, clearing up this Truth, and *next* some *Conclusions*, pointing out the improvement, that may be made thereof.

First, As for the *Propositions*, take these following;

I. The Lord standeth under the Relation

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on of a King to His Church and People; He hath taken to himself that Name and Title: and accordingly we finde them eyeing this, in the day of their Distress; So *David Psal. 5: vers. 2. and 84: v. 2.* embraceth Him, crying, *My King and my God:* and he comforteth himself with this *Psal. 10. v. 16. The Lord is King for ever and ever.* And the Church crieth out *Psal. 74: v. 2. God is my King of old:* and comforteth herself with this *Eesai. 33: v. 22. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us.* So doth the Lord make a sweet promise of this, for the Comfort of His people, *Hos. 13: v. 10. I will be thy King.* Whereby we see, that there is such a relation betwixt God and His People, that will yeeld Comfort, in an evil day.

2. He is not a King, that is far off; but is neer at hand, in the midst of His Kingdom and People: And this is also comfortable: Kingdomes may have a King, and yet be little the better of Him; he may be far away, and unable to help them, in the day of their greatest necessity; But it is not so with Zions King, He is alwayes at hand, in the midst of His People: He is established King in Zion. *Psal. 2: v. 6. Yet I*

have set my King (saith the Father of His Son, the Mediator) *upon my holy hill Zion.* His whole Kingdome is, as it were, his Throne, and there He sitteth, as King on his Throne; and He is placed and fixed there by a sure and unchangable Decree. That question of *Jeremiah Chap. 8: v. 19.* putteth the matter out of question, *Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?* So *Pf. 99: 2. The Lord is great in Zion.* Zions King then is a great King, in the midst of her.

3. Zions King is a King actually reigning upon His Throne, and exercising His Kingly Office; not like a King, imprisoned, or put out of a capacity of helping, or relieving his distressed Subjects; for He reigneth *Pfal. 93: v. 1. and 97: 1. and 99: v. 1.* It is the bringing of good tidings, the publishing of Peace, the bringing of good tidings of good, the publishing of Salvation, to say unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth Esai. 52: v. 7.* Zions King is not a King outted and dethroned; but actually reigning and swaying His Scepter, exerceing His Kingly Office and Government.

4. Zions King is an everlasting King, He shall reigne for ever and ever: He can-
not

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not be dethroned, He must reigne until all His Enemies be made His footstool 1 Cor. 15: v. 25. for He is settled on His throne by an everlasting and unchangable decree Ps. 2: v. 6, 7. And therefore He is called the King eternal 1 Tim. 1: 17. That is a sweet and comfortable Word of Promise Ps. 146: v. 10. The Lord shall reigne for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Micah 4: 7. And the Lord shall reigne over them, in mount Zion, from hence forth, even for ever. Psal. 10: v. 6. The Lord is King for ever and ever. And Psal. 45: 6. Thy Throne, ô God, is for ever & ever. Jer. 10: 10. The Lord—— is an everlasting King; and so His Kingdome is an everlasting Kingdom; for it is said Luk. 1: 33. He shall reigne over the House of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdome there shall be no end. So Revel. 11: 15. And the Seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, the Kingdomes of this world, are become the Kingdomes of the Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reigne for ever and ever.

5. Not onely doth this King reigne in the midst of Zion, His Kingdome and Throne; but He ruleth in the midst of His Enemies Psal. 110: 2. This is advantageous and comfortable; For He can reach

them a blow, when He will: And all their Consultations, and Cabinet Counsels, are well known to Him ; He ruleth in the midst of them , and over - ruleth all their Plots and Actions , as He seeth good; & is working out His own holy ends and designs by what they are doing : Hence it followeth *ver. 5, 6.* That He shall strike *thorow Kings , in the day of His wrath.* He shall judge among the Heathen ; He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many Countries. Other Kings must make use of Spies and Intelligencers, to know the purposes and motions of their Enemies ; and after all their paines remaine ignorant; or if they come to some knowledge thereof, be unable to prevent the mischief designed : But this King ruleth , as Commander in chiefe, among the very Enemies , though they know it not.

6. This King of Zion, is a mighty and great King, He is excellent in Power & Majesty ; and therefore is stiled *King of Kings Revel. 17: 14.* He is the blessed and only Potentat , the King of Kings , and Lord of Lords *I Tim. 6: 15.* He hath on His thigh and on his Vesture , a name written , *King of Kings , and Lord of Lords Revel. 19: 16.* And therefore

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fore by Him Princes rule, and all the Judges of the earth vers. 16. He is a King therefore endued with Supream Power and Authority, higher than the Kings of the earth, whose petty Sovereignty is as nothing compared with His.

7. As He is a Mighty and Powerful King; so is He a Righteous and just King. He shall reigne in righteousness. *Esai. 32: 1. The scepter of His Kingdome is a right scepter Psal. 45: 6. He loveth righteousness, and hateth wickedness vers 7. just and true are all His wayes, who is King of Saints Revel, 15: 3. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne Psal. 97: 2. Yea the King's strength loveth judgment, He establisheth equity, He executeth judgment and equity in Jacob Psal. 99: 4. His strength and Power needeth not be terrible unto his Subjects, for His throne is a throne of judgement, and His scepter is a scepter of Righteousness: All His Regalia have this engraven on them, to the great comfort of His Subjects.*

8. He is a King, that is clothed with Majestie and Terrour; and so is able to affright and strike terrour in the heart of the greatest & proudest Adversaries *The Lord reigneth, and He is clothed with Majesty Psal*

93: 1. This mighty one girdeth His sword² on His thigh, marcheth with Glory and Majesty, and in Majesty he rideth prosperously Psal 45: 3, 4, 5. The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all people, and His name is great and terrible. Psal. 99: 2, 3. Clouds and darkness are round about Him, a fire goeth before Him, His lightnings enlightened the world, the earth saw and trembled, the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth Psal. 97: vers 2, 3, 4, 5. What Enemy then is able to withstand, or resist this Potentat.

9. He is a King thorowly furnished with all Enduements and necessarie Qualifications for the Exercise of this His Government. Grace is poured into his lips, and He is anoynted with the oile of gladness above His fellowes Psal. 45: 2, 7. In Him are hid all the treasurers of wisdom and knowledge; yea in Him dwelleth all the subties of the Godhead bodily Col. 2: 3, 9. He is then a Compleet King, fully able to administrate this Kingly Office, and to performe all Acts belonging thereunto, in truth and faithfulness, and in due season.

10. As he is a King terrible unto the Kings of the earth Psal. 76: 12. and is clothed.

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clothed with Majestie and Power; so is He a King, that is meek and lowlie: Even when ~~he~~ He rideth in Majestie, it is upon truth and meekness, as the words may be rendered Psal. 45: 4. When He rideth in state, it is upon Meekness. He is a King that cometh ——— having Salvation, lowlie and rideing upon an Asse, and upon a colt the foale of an asse Zech. 9: 9. Mat. 21: vers 5. Though He be the terriblest King, that ever was, unto Enemies and Rebels; yet He is all meekness unto his own.

11. This King, who sitteth and ruleth upon His throne, is a Priest upon His throne Zech. 6: 12, 13. ——— Behold, the man, whose name is the Branch, and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the Temple of the Lord; even He shall build the Temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and He shall be a Priest upon his Thron; and the Counsel of peace shall be betwixt them both. Such a King is He, that will not destroy His followers, notwithstanding of their sins and rebellions, but will rather make an attonement for them, lay down His life for them, and become an Intercessour on their behalfe.

12. He is an ancient King. His throne

is established of old ; and He is from everlasting *Psal.* 93: 2. The goings forth of this Ruler of Israel have been of old from everlasting *Micah.* 5: 2. And thus His throne is from everlasting to everlasting.

13. This King of Zion hath Dominion over all the earth, over hell & over death. Angels and Authorities and Powers are made subject unto him *I Pet.* 3: vers 22. He hath them all under his command and Authority, that He may dispose and make use of them, as He seeth fit. By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, Visible and Invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by Him and for Him *Col.* 1: 16. God hath put all things under His feet, and hath given Him to be Head over all things to the Church *Ephes.* 1: 22. He is King of all the earth, and He reigneth over the Heathen *Psal.* 47: 7, 8. All Power in Heaven and in Earth is given unto Him *Mat.* 28: 18.

14. He is a King that rideth prosperously *Psal.* 45: 4. The work He undertaketh doth not misgive in His hand, nothing miscarrieth, or can miscarry, which He undertaketh. He is the happiest sweyer of
of

of a scepter, that ever was. His purposes fail not; He is not disappointed of his Projects or Designes; all of them succeed well in His hand. *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Esai 53: 10.*

Secondly, From these Comfortable Propositions, let us draw some comfortable Conclusions.

I. The Church and People of God are not an headless, helpless Company, as many take them to be. They have an Head, and a living head, though Strangers and On-lookers do not observe it, nor beleieve it. The world, and the men of the world, look upon them, as a contemptible Company; yet they have a King reigning over them, and a King that shall reigne for ever and ever. They themselves are oft times perplexed and distressed in minde, when they see not one great Person owning them and their Interest, and offering himself to be an head unto them; but if they knew, what an one they had for their Head, Husband and King, they would not be much troubled, though not one great Person in all the earth should owne them and their Cause: So that when all earthly Powers forsake them, and withdraw their helping hand, this may comfort them,

That there is a standing relation betwixt Christ and them, as is betwixt a King and his Subjects, and this relation neither is, nor can be broken off.

2. Let devils & men do what they can, they shall not be able to destroy and root out the People of God. They may intend to destroy, & to cut them off from being a Nation, that the name of Israel may be no more made mention of; and may make a strong combination for this end, as *Psal. 84: vers 4*. But this their Interprise is vaine, they will never be able to effectuate what they designe. Seing He is a King, that reigneth on his Throne, He must have a Kingdom and a People, whom He must governe, and over whom He must swey His Scepter. So that whoever would resolve to destroy His Kingdom, must first think of making Him no King; take away His Kingdom, and take away His Scepter too; Himself must be dethroned, ere He have no Kingdome. Enemies then may attempt great things, and promise to themselves great success; but in end, they will prove themselves to be fooles; for He must reigne for ever and ever, and His Kingdom must be to all Generations. He shall reigne for ever, and of His Kingdom

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dom there shall be no end. *Luk. 1: vers 33.* His people then may be at peace, though they know what great things their Enemies designe against them, and that their cruelty and rage is such, as nothing but their utter overthrow and destruction will satisfie; seing it is all one, as if they should presume to pull God from His throne. Let the Devil, and his trustee Livetenant, Antichrist, conspire, and use what Machinations and bloody Devices they will, to destroy the whole Interest of Christ; He must not want Subjects, He shall not want a Kingdom, so long as Sun and Moon endure: Howbeit the people of God may be several times brought very low; yea and almost out of sight, as a Woman fled to the wilderness; yet this exalted King, who is set upon His throne, by an everlasting Decree, must have a Kingdom, & shall have a Kingdom, over which to swey His Scepter.

3. Yea Christ's Kingdom must be a coming and a growing Kingdom *Luk. 1: vers 32.* He must be great, and have the throne of His Father David: Many excellent promises have we of this: *Micah. 4: 1, 2, 3.* But in the last daies, it shall come to passe, that the mountaine of the house of the Lord.

Lord, shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it, and many Nations shall come--and He shall judge among the people. So Esai. 2: 2, 3, 4. Rev. 11. vers 15. And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the Kingdomes of this world, are become the Kingdomes of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reigne for ever & ever. We are taught to pray daily, *Let thy Kingdom come.* Our Lord shall be great to the ends of the earth Micah. 5: 4.

4. Wherefore, Let Enemies do what they can, His Church shall not get much hurt: For so long as He is in the midst of her, she cannot be moved, though the earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled, though Mountains shake with the swellings thereof. Psal. 46: 5. It is promised Mic. 4: 7. That the Lord shall reigne over them, in mount Zion; and what followeth? *And thou, ô Toure of the Flock (vers. 8.) the strong hold of the Daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first Dominion, the Kingdome shall come to the Daughter of Jerusalem.*

5. Though it frequently come to passe,
that

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that God's people are brought low, and Enemies get the upper hand; yet Zion's King liveth; and therefore He will Assemble her, that halteth, and will gather her, that is driven out, and her that have been afflicted; and make her that halteth a remnant, & her that was cast off a strong Nation *Mica. 4: 6, 7.* Because He liveth, His members must live also. Seing the Churches Head is above the water, she cannot drown. Wherefore, upon this very ground, that Zions King liveth and reigneth, His Church and People, even while low and under the feet of Enemies, may lift up their head in hop, and be sure that their day of redemption draweth neer; and they may conclude with the Church *Eesai. 33: 22. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our King: He will save us.* Seing He is King, He can command deliverance *Psal. 44. 4. and work Salvation Psal. 74: 12.* Upon this ground, David inferreth a Delivery and a Victory *Psal. 10: v. 16. The Lord is King for ever and ever, the heathen are perished out of his land.* Enemies will not be able to stand long in Immanuel's Land. It is His work, as King, to deliver and defend His Subjects; and they may be sure, He will

will not deny Himself, He will answer
Cis Title and Relation.

6. When His people see, that all their Strength is gone, and that there is none shut up or left, they are ready to conclude, that all is gone: But what, cannot this King in Zion soon leavy an Army? How easie is it for Him, to speak to dry bones, and make them armed men *Ezek.*

37. When mention was made of this Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth were from of old, and who should stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the Majesty of the Name of the Lord His God *Micah. 5: 4.* It is added, *This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our Land, and when he shall trade in our Palaces; then shall we raise against him Seven shepherds and eight Principal men, and they shall waste the Land of Assyria with the sword, and the Land of Nimrod, in the entrance thereof. Thus shall He deltver us, from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our Land, and treadeth within our borders. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentils, in the midst of many people, as a Lion among the beasts of the forest, as the young Lion among the Flocks of sheep — Thine hand shall be lift up upon thine Adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be*

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be cut off vers. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. When His people are brought very low, so that, in all probability, they shall not be able to raise up themselves; then this King can help the business, He can raise up an invincible army, out of lame sick souldiers. He can make Jerusalem a cup of trembling, and a burdensome stone; for all people Zech. 12: 2, 3. He can make the Governours of Judah like on hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf, and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand & on the left ver. 5. He can make Him, that is feeble among them, like David, and the house of David, as God, as an Angel of the Lord before them v. 8. Out of Him cometh the corner, out of Him cometh the nail, out of him the battel bow ——— and He can make them to be as mighty men, which tread down, as the mire of the street, in the battel; and He can strengthen the house of Judah. Zech 10: 4, 5, 6. He can bend Judah for himself, and fill the bow with Ephraim, & raise up Zions sones against their Enemies Zech. 9: 13: He can make poor worm Jacob, a new sharp threshing Instrument having teeth; and say to them, thou shalt thresh the mountains; and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff &c. Esai. 41: 14, 15.

7. This

7. This Consideration speaketh dread and ter:our unto Enemies ; for He is a King , that is terrible to the Kings of the earth . He maketh the Earth , and the heavens to tremble , the hills melt and quake before him ; & what then can weak man do ? What will they be , in the hands of the Almighty , who shaketh Nations ? *The Lord reigneth , Let the earth tremble , He sitteth between the Cherubims , Let the earth be moved Psal. 99: 1.* At the wrath of this everlasting King , the earth shall tremble ; and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation *Jer. 10: 10.* Where then shall His Enemies stand , in the day of His Indignation ? We are oft afraid of the terrour of Enemies , but saw we Him , who is our King , we would see , that our Enemies had more cause to be afraid of Him , who is clothed with Majestie : *there goeth a smock out of his nostrils , and fire out of His mouth devoureth and coals are kindled by it Psal. 18: vers. 8.* Read what followeth .

8. When we are thinking on the Wit , Skil and Activity , of the Adversaries , let us call to mind , that our King is infinitely beyond them , He searcheth the heart and tryeth the reines ; He knoweth the

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the thoughts afar off: He is privie to all the motions of Adversaries; He knoweth when they march, and when and where they halt *Esai. 10: 28, 29.* See what is said of our King *Esai. 11: 2, 3.* *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and of the Fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding, in the fear of the Lord.* Though the Adversaries should soon out-wit us; yet they will not be able to out-wit Him, who is our King; for the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are in Him: So that it is an easie business for Him, to countermine all their Plots and Machinations. He hath formed all their hearts, and so He knoweth what is in their hearts. Nothing can be hid from Him, His very eye-lids try the Children of Men *Psal. 11: 4.* Wherefore, when we are at a *non-plus*, and know not what to do, this may comfort us, and compose our Spirits, our King knoweth very well, how to carry on his own Contrivances, & glorious Projects: So that when we are blinde, we are to look to Him, who knoweth what to do, when we know not what to do; and let Him alone with His own work.

9. It is

9. It is sad, when the Children of God are wronged, and cannot get faire Justice: wickedness is to be seen in the place of judgment, and iniquity in the place of righteousness *Eccles. 3: v. 16.* judgment is turned away backward, and Justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter; yea truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey *Eesai. 59: v. 14, 15.* But here is comfort against this, that Zions King reigneth, who is just, and a King that reigneth in righteousness. He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his eares, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth ~~and~~ and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loines, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins *Eesai. 11: 3, 4, 5.* His people then need not fear, seeing there is Justice to be had at His bar.

10. The Children of God are much fainted and discouraged, when second meanes are out of sight, they see not horses, nor horsemen, to appear in the fields for them; but a right sight of this Truth would prove helpful and encouraging in this case: Did they but by faith see, that
 Zions

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Zions King were reigning on His Throne, and actually swaying His Scepter, they would easily conclude, that all would be well; for this King would either work without meanes (as sometime He doth) or creat meanes for His own use: A wight man (we say) never wanted weapons; and shall our King be straitned for want of meanes? Could *Sampson*, without either Sword or Spear, only with what came next to his hand, the Jaw-bone of an asse, slay so many? And need we fear, that our King shall want Instruments, when He mindeth to work by Instruments? Omnipotency cannot want hands: Any of all the Creatures is sufficient in His hand; with vermine He made an end of proud *Herod*. If He but speak the word, He will there-with command deliverance: So that we need not fear, though the fig tree should not blossome, and though we should see nothing but dry bones, and dry bones scattered about the graves mouth, so long as this King liveth and reigneth, unto whom belong the shields of the Earth, *Pf. 47: v. last.*

II. The Lords reigning in Zion may assure us, that there are great and rich off-fallings to be had. Courtiers fear not want,
fo

^fo long as the King possesseth His Throne, yea they dar adventure to take on Luck's head (as we say) and why may not the Lords people also rejoyce on Lucks head, seing their King shall never be dethroned? It is laide *Esaï. 32: vers. 1.* that *a King shall reigne in righteousness.* And what is to follow thereupon? See *vers. 2, 3.* *And a man shall be as an hiding place from the winde, and a covert from the Tempest, as Rivers of water, in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the eares of them that hear shall hearken.*

12. This Consideration may fill the souls of his People with Joy and Consolation, however matters go with them, were they never so low, were Enemies never so high, were the case of the people of God never so desperat like: That Zions King liveth and reigneth, is the most encouraging newes, that can be, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoyce, and let the multitude of the Isles be glade thereat Psal. 97: 1.* There is Joy and gladness here sown for all the upright in heart. Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her? Said *Jeremie Chap. 8: 19.* It is a shame, that Beleevers should any way carry themselves
so,

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so as On-lookers might have ground to think, that Zions King were not in her, or that they themselves did not beleve, that Zions King indeed were reigning.

CONSIDERATION XVIII.

The time of Affliction is but short.

IT is an ordinary thing for people, under Affliction, to be putting moe hours in their day, than twentie foure; to be multiplying their yeers, and accounting their moneths Yeers, their weeks Moneths, and their houres Dayes; and to be crying out, Oh will this life never have an end? How long, how long, will this Cup be holden to my head? When shall the day dawn, when God shall loose this Yoke from off my neck? *The Harvest is past, and the Summer is ended, and we are not saved, Jer. 8: vers. 20.* Will not this year put an end to our trouble? How long shall the rod of the wicked rest upon the lot of the righteous?

L How

How long will God lengthen - out this sad trial ? These speeches , and the like , are but too frequent in their mouth ; and their thoughts are too oft upon this Subject : and thus eternizing their sad lot , in their mindes , or foolishly imagining , it will not have an end , in hast , they multiply their own Sorrow ; whereas did they calculat by the Scripture - account , they would see the time shorter , than they now imagine it to be. Now to help them , as to his , We shall 1. Shew what is the Scripture account of the time of Affliction. 2. Answer what can be objected to the contrary. 3. Show how this Consideration may and should be improven to advantage.

As to the *First* , The Scriptures give us this account of the matter.

1. That it will *not be for ever* 1 King. 11. v. 39. *And I will for this afflict the Seed of David , but not for ever.* Though for their iniquities He resolved to punish and afflict the Seed of *David* ; yet it will not be for ever : And what is here spoken of *David's* Seed , will , in some respect , agree to the Church and People of God , in all ages. Ay , and there may be here a *Meiosis* ,
a Fi-

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a Figure , whereby much more is imported , than the words signifie ; and this *not for ever* , is as much as , *for a short time*. It must then be the language of unbeleef to say , that God will cast off for ever , and that *He* will be favourable no more ; for His strokes upon the Godly are not of that nature : He may afflict for a time , but not for ever.

2. The Scripture telleth us , that *these dayes will be shortened*, Matth. 20:22. *And except those dayes should be shortened , no flesh should be saved ; but for the Elects sake , those dayes shall be shortened.* Christ is speaking there of sore and sharp Tribulation , that was to come upon the Land ; and for the comfort of the Elect , He saith , that those dayes of Affliction and Tribulation should not long continue , but should be shortened for their sake : And this will hold good , in all Ages , the Lord being as careful of His Elect now , as then , and His Elect being as ready to fainte , through long Affliction now , as formerly : Therefore the ground of this promise continuing , we must not say , that the promise it self is out of date : To say then , that Affliction shall never have an end , is

upon the matter , to annul this Promise.

3. We finde the Scripture saying, That Affliction , or the rod of the wicked , should not rest upon the Lot of the righteous , lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity , *Psal. 125: v. 3.* This promise containeth likewise, in the bosome of it , a ground of assurance , that it is not expired ; for as long, as the righteous are in hazard of putting forth their hands unto iniquity , because of the continuance of the trouble ; we may eye this promise , that the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon their lot ; & this ground will alwayes endure ; and so the promise , bearing this Ground and Reason in its bosome , will continue likewise in force. We must not then say , that Afflictions on the Godly shall never have an end , unless we would withall destroy this promise. Therefore we may conclude , that the People of the Lord shall not be the rest of the burden of the Word of the Lord ; as it is said of *Damascus Zech. 9:1.*

4. We are also told in Scripture, That the Heaviness of Affliction is but for a Season , *1 Pet. 1: 6. wherein ye greatly rejoyce , though now for a Season (if need be) ye are in heaviness,*
through

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through manifold temptations. The word rendered *for a Season*, in the original, signifieth *a little present now*; to show that this Season is but short; a present now, without any considerable duration. If this were beleev'd, we could not be crying-out, as we are too ready to do, Oh, will those dayes never be at an end? we would see that the little inconsiderable present now, or point of time, would quickly be over. See *Revel. 6: 11.*

5. The Scripture tels us of a *little while*, *Heb. 10: 37. for yet a little while, and He that shall come will come &c.* The expression is most emphatick in the Original, & cannot well be rendered to the full; as if he had said, *yet a little, how little, how little?* As if it could not be expressed, how little the time was to be. This little while, or appointed time (as it is called *Habb. 2: .3*) will soon be over.

6. The Scripture pointeth it out to be a *very little while* *Esai. 10: 25. for yet a very little while, and the Indignation shall cease &c.* In the Original there are two words, both of them signifying a little time, or a very little time; and so it is as much as if he had said. *a very little little time.* Sure that time cannot be long, which is so short, that the short-

ness of it cannot be expressed. Is it not then strange, that when the Spirit of the Lord cannot (to speak so) get words to express the shortness of the duration of their trouble, they on the contrary cannot get words sufficiently to express their sense of the length of the time?

7. We finde it called by a definite number *Ten dayes*, Revel. 2: 10. ——— *And ye shall have tribulation ten dayes*; Whereby the shortness of the duration of that tribulation is expressed; not that the trouble was to continue just ten dayes; but to signifie that it was not to continue long, but a short inconsiderable time, which the Lord had determined and limited punctually to a day. Tribulation will not last alwayes, Ten dayes will put a period to it.

8. If this be too long, we have it expressed as yet much shorter; even *a night*, which is no long time *Psal. 30: 5.* ——— *Weeping may endure for a night*, &c. The dark disconsolat weeping time will not endure long, the few houres of a night will put an end to it: It is but a night, and a night, that hath the dawning of a day following it. We should be ashamed then, to think, or say, that our Trouble and Affliction will alwayes last; we never saw a
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night yet, but it had a morning of a new day following it.

9. If this should yet seem too long, we have it denominated from a shorter time, as an *hour* *Revel. 3: 10.* there is mention made of an *hour of temptation*, that was to come on all the earth. Our Lord; sure, would hereby confute our errour of construing the time to be too long, when He doth of purpose mention such short measures of time. An hour will soon be at an end, the few minuts thereof will swiftly pass away.

10. Nay, if this should seem too long, we have it expressed by a shorter duration viz. of a *moment*, *Pf. 30: 5.* for his anger endureth but a moment. And what can be shorter, than a moment? Is there any measure of time shorter, than a moment? And yet by this is the duration of the Anger of God against His Children, in afflicting of them, expressed. Why then should we account that an age, which the Lord calleth but a moment? So *Esa. 54: 8.* In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment. The word rendered *moment* signifieth cutting or dividing, and so importeth the shortest cutting or division of time. The Apostle speaketh thus of it also.

L 4 2 Cor. 4:

2 Cor. 4: 17. *Our light Affliction, which is but for a moment.* The Apostles expression is singular, there is a lightness of Affliction, and that lightness is but a momentary lightness; Now weightiness or lightness is not measured by time; yet the Apostle, in a most emphatick manner doth so here, to shew us, that all the weight of the Affliction (in comparison of the glory, that is coming) is meer lightness; or is so light, that it cannot be measured with the least of weights; and therefore he saith, it is but a momentary thing, like a feather falling on a mans hand and immediatly blown away againe. It can be nothing then, but shameless unbelief, that saith the time is long.

II. Nay, which is yet more; as if this duration were yet too long, it is expressed by a *little moment* *Eesai. 26: vers. 20.* As if it were a little part of the least division of time, if there be any moment less then another, that is the right name of the duration of the Troubles and Afflictions of His People. So *Eesai. 54 vers. 7.* It is called a *small moment.* And can we imagine how it can be less? If the People of God had the measuring of the time of their trouble, in their own hand, could they give it any shorter duration, than this? Could they ima-

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imagine a shorter? When the Spirit of the Lord expresseth it thus, We should be ashamed to think it too long.

But it will be objected (and this is the *Second* thing I am to speak to) That the Lords ordinary dispensation with His people in all ages seemeth to contradict this, for ordinarily, if not alwayes, we see, that the Afflictions of His People are of long continuance: did not Israel wander Forty Yeers in the Wilderness? After they came into Canaan, did they not serve the King of *Mesopotamia* Eight yeers *Judg. 3: 8.* and the King of *Moab* Eighteen *vers. 14.* and the King of *Canaan* Twenty Yeers *Judg. 4: 3.* & the King of *Midian* Seven Yeers *Judg. 6: vers. 1.* Were they not captives in *Babylon* Seventy Yeers? not to mention their being now Non-churched above sixteen hundreth Yeers? How then can this time be called and accounted so short?

For clearing of this, we shall propose these few things following to Consideration,

I. The time of the Affliction of His people may be accounted short, in regard of the great and manifold effects, which God is to bring about by the same, a through Consideration of which would make us say, (if we judged according to our usual man-

ner) that the Afflictions must of necessity continue a long time , to the end those great and noble effects may be produced thereby. Would we consider, how much Dross and Corruption in His own people remaineth to be purged away, as Pride, Carnality, Inordinat Self-love, and Love of Pleasures, Riches, Honours , Ease &c. Carnal-Security, Passion, Self-conceite, Formality, Hypocrisie &c. we would see a necessity for the Crosses lying-on for a long time, in order to the purging of these away; As also would we consider how much Hypocrisie, Hollow-heartedness there is to discover; how many false Friends to Christ and His Interest, there are to be made known. we could not but think, that of necessity, in order to the effectuating of this discovery, a long time of trouble and trials were requisite. As likewise, if we called to minde, how many things His people are to learne thereby. Considering I say, those and such like noble Effects, which the great Master of Work is to effectuate and produce by the Affliction; And how they would seem to call for the continuance of the same for a considerable time. And withall how notwithstanding the Lord prevents the thoughts of many. and maketh a short work; and doth that in a few Moneths.

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Moneths or Dayes, which we could have thought should have called for many Yeers. When then the Lord maketh such a quick dispatch of such a great Business, we may well say, that the time is short, and that many Years are but a very short time.

2 The time of Afflictions may be accounted short, considering what our Sins and Provocations call for at His hand. When in righteousness the Lord might keep us under the rod all our dayes, and multiply Afflictions upon us, to our very dying day, Ten or Twenty Years Captivity should seem a very short time, a few Years Imprisonment would seem nothing to a man, who had been condemned to perpetual Imprisonment: To another possibly, who got no such Sentence, a few Moneths Imprisonment would seem longer, than many Years to him, because he expected no less, than perpetual Imprisonment. So, were we considering, that in regard of our deservings, the time of Afflictions might justly be continued to the end of our dayes, a few Years or Moneths would appear to be no considerable time. Wherefore in respect of our deservings, a long time of Affliction is but a short time; because the longest is nothing to what we have deserved.

L 6 3. The

3. They may be accounted short, in respect of the dayes of Prosperity, which they have had sometimes in the world. The Lord doth not alwayes chide, He will not cast off for ever, but though he cause griefe, yet will He have compassion, according to the multitude of His tender Mercies *Lam. 3: vers. 32.* and so He sendeth Prosperity, which lasteth longer, than their Adversitie did; as we see *Judg. 3: vers. 11.* after Eight Years bondage, they had rest Fourtie Years: And *vers. 30.* after Eighteen Years trouble, they had rest Fourscore Years. So *Chap. 5: vers. last.* after twenty Years bondage, they had rest Fourty Years. Thus the Lord sometimes sendeth such a length of Prosperity, that the dayes of Adversity are forgotten, as if they had been few and inconsiderable.

4. The time of Affliction may be accounted short, considering how that oftentimes, for as long as the delivery seemeth to be a coming, yet, when it cometh, His People are surprized therewith, their expectation is prevented; they imagined, in their own apprehensions, a longer duration of the trouble, so that mercy preventeth them, when it cometh; and this maketh the by-past time of their Affliction seem short. Though the People of God had been a considerable

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derable time in bondage, and under the feet of Adversaries; yet it appeared unto them, but (as it were) as the time betwixt seed time and harvest *Psal. 126: vers. 5. 6.* after God had wonderfully delivered them out of Captivity and Bondage, they draw this Conclusion from this rare Act of Gods Providence about them. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy, and he that goeth forth and weepeth having precious seed, shall doubtless come againe with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with him.* Whereby is imported that Gods People, abiding by the Lord, though they should meet with Affliction, in their Duty, and be made to weep sore, be reason thereof; yet the time of delivery should come, like an Harvest with fruit. recompensing all their toile and tears: and so, they summed up all their Seventy Years into less than Seven Moneths. And how came it to passe, that the time seemed so short? That *Psalme* pointeth this forth, as one Reason hereof, *Vers. 1: When the Lord turned againe the Captivity of Zion, we were like men that dream.* They were surprized with the mercy, for they did not look for it; but thought their exiled Condition should have continued longer, because they saw no appearance or probability of a returne. So that in regard of what the People of God themselves

may imagine, the time of the Affliction may be short.

5. It may likewise be accounted short and inconsiderable, in regard of the wonderful and extraordinary goodness of God, that appeareth in the delivery; when it cometh, it may be attended with such signal and notable Mercies, which so fill their souls with amazement and satisfaction, that the length of the time of their Affliction disappeareth and evanisheth; and, as if it had been nothing, it is presently forgotten. So in that forecited *Psal. 126: vers 2.* The delivery is accounted signal and wonderfully remarkable, such as *filled their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with singing.* It was such a notable delivery, accompanied with so many rare Passages, and carrying in the bosome of it so many rare demonstrations of Gods Power, Tenderneſs, Faithfulness, Constancy and loving Kindness, that they could not but be filled with admiration thereat, and have their tongues loosed to sing his praises: Yea they took notice of this circumstance, which increased the admirableness of the delivery, that even Strangers and Heathens were made to say, that God had done great things for the poor Jewes; and they themselves, being no less convinced hereof, could not but subscribe

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to the truth thereof, and (as it were) take the word out of their mouth, and say v. 3. *The Lord had done great things for us, whereof we are glad.* Now this being so remarkable a delivery, the first sight and apprehension of it did so fill their soul with Joy and Admiration, that the long Seventy Years Bondage seemed to them, but as the paines and labour of a few Moneths, in expectation of a good harvest, after the seed was sown: as the long paines of a women travelling in Child-birth are forgotten, when she hath brought forth a Man-Child. In respect therefore of the delivery, so signal as to its Ingredients, Attendants and Circumstances, the time of Affliction may appear as nothing.

6. This time of Affliction may appear to be short, in respect of the Comfort and Support which the Lord may bestow upon them in the Affliction: His Presence and Company may so sweeten the Lot, that the time may (as it were) steal away, and scarce be observed: what is a whole Years Affliction, when God is pleased to shine in love upon the soul during that time? Good Company will make the Journey seem short, and the way good, which other-ways would be tedious. Now the Lord is pleased sometimes so to manifest Himself,

self, as to fill His People with Joy, and this so sweeteneth the trouble, and cutteth the time short, that many Years seem but a few dayes.

7. The time may be accounted short, in respect of the rich recompence of reward, that is coming. If we should lay this in the ballance with an hundred Years Bondage and Affliction, what would all these Years of trouble seem to be, but as the trouble of a moment, when it is past? Therefore, when *Paul* taketh a view of the exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, which was coming, all the Afflictions in this earth appeared as nothing in his eyes: the transcendent Glory & incomprehensible Excellency of the one, eateth away the duration of the other to a thing of nothing 2 Cor. 4: ver. 17. It is with the Beleever, in this case, as it was with *Jaacob*, when he was serving for *Rachel*, Seven Years enduring of the cold frost by night, and the heat by day, seemed unto him but as a few dayes, For the love he had to her Gen. 29: vers. 20. The thoughts of the rich and upmaking reward, that faithful Sufferers have to look-for, will cause a long time of sad Affliction seem short.

8. The time of Affliction is so short, that it is as nothing, in comparison of Eternity:

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the exceeding and eternal weight of Glory will make the Afflictions light & momentary. What is the whole of time unto Eternity? Is there any comparison betwixt what is finite, & what is Infinite? Seing then the whole of time is not as a moment of time to all eternity; what can the longest duration of Affliction be, but as an inconsiderable part of that inconsiderable whole? VVhat do those, who are up before the Throne, think of the many Years of their Trouble and Persecution here below? Are they, think we, calculating it by Years or by Dayes, or by Houres? Oh no, all of it is, with them, comprized within the Circle of a small inconsiderable point.

These and the like particulars being duely pondered and considered, it will appear, how the longest time of Affliction, that we can have here, is but short & inconsiderable: And it is our not weighing and laying of these things to heart, which maketh our trouble seem so long.

Thirdly, VVe come now to speak of the Christian and Edifying Improvement of this Consideration: which is by fixing it in our heart, as a sure truth, that the time of Affliction is indeed but short. And had we the faith hereof rooted in our souls, we would be in case to carry Christianly under
Afflictions

Afflictions : For the faith hereof would produce several sweet and useful Effects , in our hearts , seasonable and profitable for such a time : Such as these following.

2. The fixed apprehension of this , that the time of trouble is but short , would fortifie the Soul of a Beleever against the false suggestions of the Devil , which he maketh much use of at that time , to disquiet their hearts , and make their lives bitter. He will labour to perswade them , that God looketh on them as Enemies , otherwise He would not continue their heavy Affliction so long ; and thus tempt them to question their Interest in God. But the faith of this truth would enable the Beleever to answer this Objection , and to repel this Temptation , by saying , *His anger is but for a moment* , His face will not alwayes be hid ; this blast will go over ; and therefore I have no cause to call my Interest in question , upon this account.

2. The fixed faith of this would keep the Beleever from questioning the promises , upon the account , that the Lords Dispensations did seem to threaten a long lasting trouble ; and a sad life of Affliction for a long time. Temptation , it is true , will then say , God hath forgotten to be gracious , He will be favourable no more , His faithfulness

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fulness faileth for ever. But the Soul, believing this Conclusion, will say, what a poor insignificant ground is that for me, whereupon to call the faithfulness of God in question? If the trouble were lengthened out yet longer, all the time is but short, it will soon have an end.

3. The faith of this will contribute much to hold up *Hop's* Head. When the afflicted Person, through the Power of Temptation, is made to cry-out, O! This Trouble will never have an end, this perplexity and exercise is but growing; and what shall I do? Then hope beginneth to fail, and when hop faileth, the soul sincketh: But now, when this Consideration is seriously thought upon, and the soul is made to say, all the time of Affliction, which his Children meet with here, is but short, it will not alwayes last, it is but for a moment, yea and for a very short moment; then hop is made to lift up its head; for the man will be ashamed to quite his hop, and despond, who knoweth that the storme will quickly be over, and be but like a may-shoure.

4. The Faith of this will help unto the exercise of *Patience*: when we look upon the trouble, as that which will not end, or must be of long continuance, our courage departeth, our spirits fail, and we storme and
grow

grow Impatient. But when we by faith look thorow the thick and black side of the dispensation, and see the end of the calamity nigh at hand, the moment posting away, how sweetly will we lay our necks under the yoke, and set our faces against the storme, and hold on our Journay? How patiently will we bear the Indignation of the Lord, when we know, that it will be over within a moment? We will be ashamed to quarrel, or complaine, when we know, that a period shall quickly be put thereunto. The Apostle told the *Hebrewes* Heb. 10: 36. that they *had need of patience*: And to encourage them unto Patience, he tels them, that within a little while, yea a very little while. He that should come, would come, and would not tarry *vers.* 37.

5 The faith of this will help unto *Constancy* and *Stedfastness*. When we once conceive and apprehend, that our trouble shall be of long endurance, we grow weak, and unable to stand out against temptations; and are ready to say, because this storme will not soon blow over, it is best to row to a lee shore, and comply with the sinful courses of the time: Whereas did we see and beleve, that the storme would not endure long, but be quickly gone, we would be encouraged to ride it out, and enabled
to

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to withstand temptations unto a sideing with the workers of Iniquity.

6. It would help also unto Christian *cheerfulness* under the Crosse; when we know that it will be but a blast, soon over and gone, our Countenance will not fall, nor our courage fail: but when we represent the trouble to ourselves, as of long continuance, and we beginne to doubt if ever it shall have an end, then we become discouraged, and our countenances are cast down, and we appear no more couragious and cheerful: How do our hearts faint, and our hands fail us? The Consideration of the short and momentany Affliction kepted-up Pauls heart, and made him say, *For this cause we fainte not* 2 Cor. 4: 16, 17.

7. The faith of this would free us from many feares, that ordinarily attend such a Condition; we are, while under Affliction, saying, what if this or that fall out? But the faith of this would hush these troublesome feares and questions to the door. The Tribulation being but to continue ten dayes, we would fear none of these things *Revelat. 2: v. 10.*

CONSIDERATION. XIX.

Remember *Peter's* fall *Mat.*

26. vers 33, 34, 35.

IN a time of trials and temptations, as it is of advantage to be calling to minde, and presenting to ourselves the Christian, and commendable Carriage of such, as have been helped of the Lord, to witness a good Confession for Him, and for His Cause and Interest, before men; to the end we may thereby be encouraged to follow their example, and to adventure on the Promises with them, and not to fear the faces of men, in Christ's Cause; so it may be of use for us also, to present before our eyes, and to take notice of the faintings of others, in the day of Trial, that thereby we may learn, to walk in fear, and not to trust to ourselves, or to any thing within us; and to watch, lest we enter into temptation, when we are not in case to wrestle against it.

We have here before us a sad and an alarming Instance viz. the foule fall of an Eminent man, in the houre of Temptation, which

which may be Improved to advantage.

After Christ and His Disciples had been supping together, at that Instituted Feast, He tels them some sad and wakening newes *vers.* 31, 32. to Teach us (1.) That we are never more ready to grow secure, and to think that our mountain stands so strong, that it shall never be moved. than when we have had greatest Enjoyments of and Communications from the Lord, and nighest Access unto him. (2.) That there is never less cause of security, than at that time; for the higher we have come in our attainments, the Devil is the nigher with his storme. (3) That we should never be secure; but even, when we win neereft God, we should resolve upon and prepare for new assaults, and temptations. But withal it is remarkable, that the Lord delayed the signification of the sad things, that were to fall out, until the feast was ended, and they had sung a hymne; knowing that they would then be best in case to bear the sad report; and not loving to marre their mirth, at that feast of love.

Though Christ had told them, that they should all be offended because of him, that night; yet *Peter*, out of a piece of manly courage (as would appear) promising too much upon his own head, would not beleeve;

leeve; but would rather make his Master a false Prophet, than suspect his own weakness: Therefore Christ tells him, that he should be more offended, than any of the rest; and that he should deny Him thrice, ere the next morning came *vers. 34*. But all this would not lay the high conceite, that Peter had of himself; for he resolved rather to die, than do that; and this he avowed openly, little knowing this own strength.

In this carriage, and in these Answers of Peter, there are some things good, and some things bad; and the noticing of both may be of use to us. As for such things, as are good here, and may yeeld us some Instruction, we shall mention these three.

First, It was good, that Peter was convinced, & did acknowledge, that it was his duty, and the duty of all Christ's Disciples, to avow their Master, and not to be offended in Him, whatever came. And this is an undeniable truth, That upon all hazards, Christ should be owned and avowed by all, that would not have Him to be ashamed of them one day. And yet how little is this beleev'd & beleevingly practis'd?

Secondly, It was good, that he was convinced, and that he confessed, that it was his duty, though all the rest should have left

left alone, yet notwithstanding to owne and avow his Master, and not deny him: For Christ and His truth and cause is worthy to be owned and avowed, how small so ever our encouragment from others be: And as we should not follow a multitude to do evil; so neither will the defection of many justifie our defection, and lessen our fault, if we depart from the faith.

Thirdly, It was good, that he saw, and acknowledged, that he was obliged to owne his Master, and stand at his back, be the hazard never so great; and that the very fear of death, should not cause him deny his Master. *Thou b* (saith he) *I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* And indeed all, that would be faithful Disciples to Christ, must not think their life dear to the death for Him; but must be dead to life and all that is dear to them.

But that which we would chiefly here take notice of is, that which was amisse in him; and which will ground some sad Truths for our use; As

First. He had too great a conceite of himself; and thought too much of what he had, & of what he was Hence *obs.* That Christians are too ready to be puffed up with thoughts of themselves; and are in hazard

to be carryed away with this evil of self conceite, and vaine thoughts of their owne worth and excellency. And this ariseth from these evils.

1. Unmortified Corruption, This is alwayes working against God, one way or other; and is as ready to work this way, as any other way.

2. Little self searching, and self examination, whereby we become strangers to the evil of our hearts, and know not what enemies are lurking there, and what wickedness aboundeth; and when we know not what is within, it is little wonder we be readily puffed up with swelling thoughts of vanity.

3. Little real acquaintance with the treachery, deceitfulness and double dealing of our false hearts: If we saw that, and saw its activity for evil, we would see more cause of humiliation, than of pride and self conceite.

4. Little mindeing & considering aright the failings and falls of others, who seemed to be as fast at the root, as we: If we thought upon this, we might have cause to feare, that we should also not be able to ride out a storme.

5. Trusting too much unto our own
present

present good disposition and frame, as if this would alwayes continue with us, and we needed to feare no change.

6. Trusting too much to our Resolutions, Purposes and earnest Engagements, considering little the treachery and deceitfulness of the heart, nor remembering our own Changeableness and Unconstancy, and that our good fits may be soon off us.

7. Little considering how we must depend on the Lord & His Influencing grace, for through-bearing in all our duties; and how we can do nothing without Him, and His supplies of grace and strength.

This should be a warning to us to guard against this evil of pride and self conceite: and to study more humility of minde; knowing better what we are, and where our strength lyeth, that we may promise less upon our own head, and undertake nothing in our own strength. And it should teach us to mourne over this body of death, and to guard against its risings & motions, and to strive against it, in all its appearances and actings.

Secondly, The foretold defection and fainting of all the rest of the Disciples maketh not him the more afrayed; but for all

that he keepeth fast his high and presumptuous thoughts of himself. Which tels us, that there is such an evil among good Persons, as not to suspect themselves, and fear their fall, notwithstanding of the supposed and foreseen fals and failings of others. And this floweth from the same evil root of pride, and self confidence. We remember not that the same evil heart of Unbelieve, Unconstancy, Treachery and Backsliding, that is in others, remaineth in us.

Whence we should learne to be war of this evil, and to know our hearts better, and suspect the evil of them more. Let us not *think of ourselves more highly than we ought* Rom 12: 3 but *Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall* 1 Cor. 10: 12. And let the examples of others put us to watchfulness & fear, lest we fall after the same example of unbelief. *Iieb 4: 11.*

Thirdly, He would not fear, though Christ told him, and that with a doubled asseveration, *verily, Verily* that himself in particular, as well as the rest, should deny him. Whence we see, how hard it is to lie open to Convictions of our own weakness, & readiness to decline in an evil day. And this floweth from the same evils of Pride, Self,

Self-confidence, & Ignorance of our hearts and wayes.

This should teach us to observe and notice the strength and activity of this piece of Corruption, which yet remaineth in the best: And to hate and strive against this evil and proud humore: As also to be jealous of ourselves, and to lye open to Convictions from the Word, and be ready to take warnings, and to tremble before the Lord, and at his Word.

Beside these things that were good, and that were bad in *Peter*. We may consider this Prediction of Christ's, and the intertainment that *Peter* gave it, whereof we have heard, with the event, and other circumstances here recorded, and thence finde some matter of Instruction.

I. Then, we may observe. That a Person may be convinced of his duty to stand by Christ and his Cause and Interest, in a day of trial, and yet deny Him, when it cometh to the point of tryal. *Peter's* Conviction of his duty to owne Christ, come what could come, did not keep him from a foule fall, in the hour of temptation: And the reason is manifest, for (1.) Convictions may evanish, or lose their force & edge: Light may grow dark, truths become question-

ed; or (2.) suppose Convictions should remaine in their force; yet it is only fresh supplies of Influences of grace, & strength, that will cause the man stand, without which he may be carried over the belly of Light, Conscience and all Convinctions, in a day of temptation..

Hence we see Light and Convictions are not enough to keep us stedfast, in a day of tryal; we must look-out for something more, and not lean to that which will not carry us thorow, more than it did *Peter*.

2. A Person may be thoroughly convinced, that he should stand by Christ and his Cause and Interest, though the defection were never so great, yea though he should be left in that quarrel alone; and yet deny Christ and his Truth, in a day of tryal: *Peter* was convinced, that he should not deny Christ, though all others should do it; and yet fell foully. And the grounds of this are the same, with the grounds of the former truth: Deep Convictions are one gift, and stability in a day of tryal is a distinct gift. Light is one thing, but grace to follow that light, is another thing.

Wherefore the deeper our Convictions be, we ought the rather to feare the more,
and

and depend the more by faith on Christ for actual Assistance, Influence and Grace to follow Convictions, and abide by Duty, in the day of tryal.

3. Clear, Plaine, Peremptour and Particular Warnings, will not be enough to keep us stedfast in an evil day: *Peter* had such here, and yet he fell in the day of temptation: And the reason is because (1.) These warnings may weare away, and be forgotten, And (2.) Pride and Corruption may so puff up, that all these shall not once pick upon the man: And so he may forget himself, and take little notice of them

The consideration of which should teach us to be Jealous of our heart, to keep humble, and feare alwayes; and to improve warnings, to a stirring of ourselves up to Diligence, Watchfulness, Acting of faith upon Christ, and Living nigh to Him.

4. A present good frame and disposition, or a fit of warmth and affection to Christ, will not be enough to secure us from a fall, in the day of tryal. As we see here in *Peter*; He seemed to be in a very good frame, at present, and full of affection, when he would rather die than deny his Master; & yet when the temptation came, he yeelded. The reasons are (1.) Such frames and

fits do not usually stay, nor leave any deep impression on the heart. (2.) Grace actuated, & blown upon one way, will not be sufficient to make grace lively another way, or for other work; but the habite must have new Influences for every new work: For (3.) without Christ we can do nothing: All our strength is in Him; in Him we must move, as well as live; and He must work in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

This should learne us, not to think much of any present fit of tenderness, or flash of affection; for that may soon wear off; nor think that that will be sufficient to carry us thorow new straits and difficulties. It were better to be learning & practising the way of faith, and of dependance upon Christ, that we may be strong in Him, and in the power of His might *Ephes. 6: 10*. That we may live in Him, and bring forth fruit in Him. Diffidence of our selves, and of any thing we have, even when we are at the best, would be more suitable and useful for us, than building too much upon such slender and slippery grounds: And the consciousness of our own Unconstancy, and Instability should make us live closer to Christ.

5. Strong Purposes and Resolutions to stand fast, in a day of tryal, will not keep

us from reeling and staggering in a stormy day : *Peter* had brave Purposes and stout Resolutions; yet he fell notwithstanding, in the hour of temptation. And the reason is because: (1.) These Purposes and Resolutions are oft ill founded with us; we ground them too oft upon something within ourselves, on our Partes and Abilities, our Light and Knowledge, and upon our Grace and Receivings from God, or upon former thorow-bearings, and the like; which may prove but a sandy foundation. (2.) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and so may faile us, in a day of strait and difficulty. (3) These purposes may soon be forgotten and laid by.

Which should learne us, not to deceive ourselves with those specious and promising flourishes of Purposes and Resolutions, even when they are real, and without the reproachings of our heart; for these are not strong enough to carry us thorow a sad storme, that may come.

6. A Person may resolve on death, in avowing Christ, and yet not stand out against a smaller temptation: *Peter* resolved to die, rather than deny his Master, and yet the word of a Damsel made him deny Christ. And that because (1.) Presupposed hazard

is not so terrible to nature , as what is present; a small trouble present is more frightful to nature than a greater trouble afar off, (2.) We oft make our Resolutions without Christ , and resolve not in Him , but in ourselves. (3.) Oftentimes these Resolutions are not deliberat , but done in a fit of a good mood and warm frame; and when that is off, the Resolutions animated thereby wax cold and faint.

The Consideration of which should make us feare alwayes, and not to trust the highest and strongest of Resolutions. Happy such as abide in Christ, and depend upon Him, for their daily Food, Strength, Courage and Activity; and undertake nothing without Him.

7. All these fast and firm-like Purposes, Vowes and Resolutions will be so far from keeping a person from a fall , in a day of temptation , that they will not, some time, keep him even for a few houres. So was it here with *Peter* ; for that very night he denied his Master. And that because (1.) A Christian, when left to himself is not able to stand - out a storme , even a very little time. (2.) Their adversary the Devil is active, subtile, and vigilant. (3.) After Vowes and fast Purposes they become secure , as thinking their hazard less, and trusting

trusting to their owne strength; and so the Devil gets most advantage, when they are gone from their watch-towr, and are fallen asleep in their security. (4.) The Lord may see it good to suffer this, to punish them for their Pride and Self-Confidence, and to let all see, that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord.

This may let us see, What an Unconstant Creature a beleever is, when he is left to himself, and how inconsistent he is with himself. And should teach us to fear most, and be most upon our guard, when we think ourselves best and safest. And to know, that our Strength and standing is in the Lord.

8. When Persons think themselves most sure, they may be nearest to a fearful fall: *Peter* thought now his mountaine stood so strong, that he should never be moved. as *David* did *Psal.* 30. And all the warnings he got did not make him once fear a fall: And yet we know, what a fearful fall followed upon this. And the reason is, because (1.) They oft judge by sense and carnal reason; and so think because they finde themselves, in a good mood at present, that all is well, and they need to fear nothing: (2.) They grow then most secure, and self-confident, and therefore neglect their

M 6 watch.

watchful, and circumspect walking, and are not in the fear of the Lord all the day long. (3.) Satan observing this watcheth his time, and finding them secure setteth on, & cannot but prevaile. (4.) Self-confidence blindeth the eyes, that they see not their owne weakness, and where Satan may have advantage against them. (5.) The only Wise God ordereth it thus, to let us see, that all Flesh is grasse.

Therefore we should never resolve to quite our Watch-towr, but alwayes minde watchfulness and circumspection, and guard against Security. Let us fear most, when we think we are safest, and beware of promising saifty and immunity to ourselves, in whatsoever condition or frame we be into. Let him that standeth take heed, lest he fall.

9. Such as have an higher conceite of themselves, than of others, may come to fall fouler than any. Peter thought more of himself, than of all the rest; and that he should stand by his Master, though all the rest should shamefully turn their back upon Him; and yet none among them all did, as he did. And the Lord wisely ordereth matters thus, that (1) All Flesh may lye low in the dust, be humble, tremble
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and feare. (2.) That the best may be jealous of themselves, and fear a fall.

(3.) That **He** may chastise the pride of some, who thought there were none comparable to them.

Which is a warning to all, to have humble and low thoughts of themselves, and to beware of proud imaginations and loftie thoughts.

10. A Person may have true Grace, and yet sinfully and shamefully shun suffering for Christ. As we see in *Peter*, who had the root of the matter in him: For to beleeve is one gift, and to suffer is another distinct gift, and they go not alwayes together. See *Phil. 1: v. 29.* of which we spoke above.

To teach us to depend upon Him for the one, as well as for the other; and not to think, that if we have grace, we need no more to carrie us honestly thorow a day of temptation. We would remember, that it must be given us in that very houre, to suffer stedfastly, and to stand to the truth.

11. A Child of God may fall into this grievous sin of denying his Lord and Master in all His Interests, in His Person, Offices, Attributes and Works. This

M 7. was

was no small sin, in which *Peter* fell, at this time: It had a long tail of direful and sad Consequences. There is no sin, which Beleevers are exempted from, but the unpardonable sin unto death, final impenitency, and final and total Apostasie. And Satan, in all his temptations, driveth at this, to have them denying, quitting and renouncing Christ.

Which should teach us (1.) To have charitie to some, that fall in a day of temptation; seing some, in whom is the root of the matter, may, being left of the Lord, fall very foule'y. (2.) To be humble and watchful all our dayes, not knowing what may befall us ere we die: We may ride thorow one, or two, or moe stormes, and yet fall shamfully, ere we go off the stage. (3) To remember what a strong and violent Body of Death we have within us; lest we turn secure and careless. (4.) To be thankful to God, if we be keeped stedfast at any time; for that is not of ourselves; the Grace and Power of God have done it. Therefore let God have the Glory, and not we ourselves.

12. When once a Beleever, in a day of temptation, beginneth to fall, and loseth
a foot,

a foot, he may fall very foully, ere he recover himself. *Peter* lost his foot, and spoke an untruth at first, simply denying his Master; but it came to fearful Oaths, Cursings and Execrations, ere all was done. For (1.) The way down-ward is very easie (2.) Satan is at hand, to drive forward; and who can stand, when the Devil driveth down ward? (3.) Conscience being once wounded will be easily made worse: If once a little hole be made in the Conscience, it is easily made wider; for tenderness and watchfulness go away.

Which should serve as a loud warning, to beware of the very beginning of a defection, and to guard against the very first breaking-in of waters. It is not safe to say, such a length I will go, and so far I will yeeld, to save a staik, and to keep my peace; but I will go no further. It were more wisdom, to hold further off the brinke and precipice, lest, if our foot slip, we recover not ourselves so easily againe: And we know not, what a providential Commission the Lord may give Satan, to drive us, by his temptations, forward to that, which we never dreamed of, because of our rash and sinful venturing, and bold
hazarding.

hazarding upon sin and known dangers. It is Wisdom to resist the beginnings of evil; then are we strongest, and best able to withstand; whileas, the more we cede and yeeld, the weaker we become, and the weaker we are, we are the more easily driven downward, and carried away of the winde of temptation.

CONSIDERATION XX.

**Gods Way of delivering
his People is hid and
mysterious.**

ESAI. XLV. VERS. 15.

*Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self.
O God of Israel the Saviour.*

BEcause right thoughts of Gods Mysterious wayes of Working, and bringing about Salvation and Deliverance, are useful, in a dark day, we shall speak alittle to this.

We finde in Scripture frequent mention made of God's hiding himself, 1. His Saints are oft complaining of it Job. 13:

v. 24.

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v. 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face?* So *Psal.* 10: 1. & 44: 24. & 88: 14. and they are making it the matter of their lamentation, and laying it forth, as the ground of their sorrow and grieve.

2. We finde this dispensation threatned be cause of sin *Deut.* 31: 18. *And I will surely hide my face, in that day, for all the evils, which they shall have wrought.*

3. We finde it also accordingly executed because of sin *Ezek.* 39: 24. *According to their uncleanness, & according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.* So *Esai.* 57: 17. *For the iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him, I hid me and was wroth.* See also *Esai.* 59: vers 2. & 64: vers 7. & 54: 7, 8.

4. We finde this dispensation accompanied with sad Effects: Such as

(1.) A not hearing of the praiers of his people *Esai.* 1: 15. *And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you.* Hence these petitions are put up together to God by the Psalmist *Psal.* 27: 7, 9. *Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice, and hide not thy face far from me.* As upon the other hand, when He heareth the cry of His people, it is an evidence that His face is not hid:

hid: Yea these are looked on as one thing, so firmly are they knit together *Psal. 22: v. 24.* — *Neither hath He hid his face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard.*

(2.) Sad and grievous Afflictions, as *Eesai. 64. 7.* *Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us.*

(3. Sad and grievous Afflictions continued, together with a not-regairding, or owning of them, in their Afflictions: For so doth the Church complaine *Psal. 44: 24* *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and oppression?*

(4.) Trouble and grieve inward *Psal 30: ver. 7.* — *Thou didest hide thy face, and I was troubled.* So *Psal. 88: v. 14.* *Lord why castest thou off my soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me?*

But this is not the hiding, whereof the Prophet in this place *Eesai. 45: 15.* is speaking: For the *hiding* here mentioned is of a far other nature, giving us properly to understand, That the Lord hath an Unseen, Unusual, Hid, Mysterious, Sublime, Excellent, transcendently and incomprehensibly Glorious way of carrying on His Work, of bringing about His holy Purposes, and of making good His
faithful

faithful Promises : The circumstances of the Text do fully make out this to be the true and genuine meaning of the words ; for the whole contexture of what preceedeth and of what followeth, is a masse of gracious Promises of great things , which the Lord was about to do , in the behalfe of His Church and interest ; and the very particular Instrument, King *Cyrus* , by whom the Lord would begin the recovery of the Estate of his Church, is designed ; and his prosperous success , in all his attempts , against what stood in his way , foretold ; Objections, that might arise in his peoples mindes removed ; and they shamed from their Unbeleeving , Querrelling , proud and arrogant Contending humore : Together with remarkable adjuncts , and concomitants of this great change of the Church to the better , in their Neighbours , *Aegyptians*, *Ethiopians* and *Sa'vans* ; as also ruine and destruction foretold, to come upon all the Enemies . Now in the midst of these thoughts , the holy Prophet breaketh out into a rapture of Admiration , having in these words , an holy Ejaculation and *Apostrophe*, as ravished with the thoughts of these great incredible-like and wonderful matters , and
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the rare and wonderful manner of bringing about this Change & Outgate, which humane understanding could not comprehend: For as one transported with joy & wonderiug, he cryeth out, in the midst of these Prophecies. *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self O God of Israel, the Saviour.* Wherein we may take notice of these foure things.

1. The frame of the Prophet, and the holy disposition of his soul, held forth by this abrupt Ejaculation.

2. The matter or occasion of this Rapture and Transport, which is twofold; for (1.) He seeth *God hiding himself*; and (2.) in that dark and unseen way, he saw him, the *God of Israel, and the Saviour.*

3. The Manner of Expressing this his admiration, with a *Verily.*

4. His venting himself thus in the bosome of God. *Verily, thou art a God &c.*

As to the *first*, the frame of soul, which was in the Prophet, at this time, we may take notice of these Particulars, which may withal point-out our duty, in a sad day.

1. We see the Prophet fixed in the faith and perswasion of the truth of what the Lord

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Lord was here promiseing, concerning his Church and People: He was confident and fully perswaded, that the deliverance of the people of God out of the *Babylonish* Captivity, in which they were to be, full Seventy yeers, would come; though at this present, while he is getting this discovery and manifestation, there was no appearance of their being brought in bondage, & led away captive out of their own land by the *Babylonians*; far less of their delivery out of that Captivity; the people being now dwelling in their owne Land, & living in peace and quiet, far from any molestation from the *Caldeans*: His faith and perswasion of the truth of what the Lord said to Him, and by Him, was the ground of this his Admiration and Ravishment: For what we do not beleeve to be true, how rare and uncouth so ever it be, it will not ravish us, nor cause in us a rapture of Admiration.

Hence we see all the sayings of God, how improbable and unlikely so ever they may be, should be embraced with fulness of faith; we should with *Abraham Rom. 4: 18. Against hope beleeve in hope*; He did not consider his own body now dead, nor the deadness of *Sarahs* womb, nor did he stagger at
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the promise of God, through unbelief; but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God, and was fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able also to performe vers. 19, 20, 21. So no more should we take any notice of the humane improbability, and of the many unlikelyhoods, and of such things, as might, to humane reason, walking upon humane grounds, make the thing promised seem altogether improbable, if not impossible: But, having the firme Word of God, who cannot lie, nor change, there to rest, as anchored upon that immovable Rock, and ride-out all stormes of carnal Reasonings, and corrupt Suggestions and Temptations of Satan.

2. We see in the Prophet, that all the consideration, that he might have had, at this time, of the Improbabilities, small Appearances, Difficulties, yea and Incapabilities to humane judgment, standing as mountaines in the way of the charriot of God's Faithfulness & Truth, coming With Salvation to his people, did but contribute to his more firme and fixed gripping of, and cleaving to, the Promises and Predictions; and raise in his soul an holy Ravishment and Rapture of

wondering , at this rare and wonderful Work of God , which he saw by faith. And this should teach us to take notice of the Difficulties , and Improbabilities , that seem to us to lye in the way of the accomplishment of the great Promises , for no other end than this , that we may become more fixed in the faith thereby, and be raised up to see more of the Glorious Power , Truth, Goodness and Faithfulness of God , and helped to get a fuller look of God, as Incomprehensible in all His wayes.

3. We may observe here , in the frame of the Prophet , That he discovered in God something Rare , Admirable , Excellent and Glorious , that ravished him , and transported his soul: He saw a Divine, Holy Myserie , in God's way : When the way of the Lord was, to humane eyes, Unclear , Dark and Cloudy , he saw the Glory of God shining forth, with greater brightness and splendour. He saw the Lord , while covered , as to his way of working, with a thick cloud , by the eye of faith ; he pierced the clouds , and saw the Invisible. *Thou art a God*: Nay he, saw , that such a way , whatever the shallow & dim-sighted Reason of Man might
 appre-

apprehend, concerning it, was God's way; and had the manifest lineaments of God engraven upon it: he saw that that hid way was God-like; and these thick clouds, that to humane reason would darken the beauty and lustre of God's Glory, did the more set off to him, the Divine Glory and Majesty of God. O what an excellent frame is this; and how useful and necessary for his people, in a day of clouds and darkness? And what a sharp eagles-eye must faith have, that can discover Glory in obscurity; and see a rare and singular sight of God, even when He is hiding himself; and can observe a greater Glory, and splendour of Excellency, in the clouds and darkness, that are about His throne. How great must the difference be betwixt that sight of God, which a Natural eye, measuring things according to the rule of Carnal Reason, can get of the most refulgent and self-manifesting Operations of God; and that discovery of God, which faith getteth, in those dispensations of God, which have no Glory or Majesty in them, unto a Carnal eye? How averse and unwilling should the consideration of this make us, to judge of God and of his Wayes and Doings, by Carnal Reason

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Reason? And how blinde a judge must that be of Gods Wayes and Dispensations?

4. We may here take notice, in the Prophets frame, That he discovereth, in the wayes of God, about which now his thoughts are occupied, an unsearchable Depth, a Mystery, and Incomprehensibleness: For he is like a man walking into the sea, and findeth it the longer the deeper, and at length is like to drown, and there standeth, and cryeth out, this ocean hath no bottom; I shall lose my selfe if I go further: He hath been, as it were, wading in his contemplations of the Mystery of God's wayes with and about his Church and People; and as one loseing ground, he cryeth out *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self*: Thy wayes are Incomprehensible, Unfathomable, and Unsearchable. As the Apostle Paul, in a case not unlike Rom. 11: 33. — *how unsearchable are his judgments, and his wayes past finding out?* David hath an expression not unlike, in his contemplations of God Psal. 145; 3. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable?*

5. It is observable in the Prophets
N frames;

frame, That as he discovereth in the wayes of God, which were now the matter of his Spiritual Meditation, a singular & rare Beauty, and Divine Excellency, a transcendent Glory; so he saw this, while all these wayes of God were covered with clouds, and darkness. Even when He was hiding himself, and clouds and darkness were round about Him, he saw, that Righteousness and Judgment were the habitation of his throne; as it is *Psal. 97: 2.* Faith can see God in the dark, and discover a God hiding himself: Faith can go - in thorow clouds and coverings and dark dispensations, and see the Glorious God acting in Majesty, and carrying on His work in Faithfulness and Truth, according to His everlasting Purposes, and Faithful Promises. This should be our study, in the day of God's hiding of Himself, as to His visible dispensations, and outward work, in the world.

6. We may here also mark, in the holy Prophets frame, a suitable Submission of spirit, & holy Acquiescence of soul, in this singular and rare way of the Lords bringing-about His Intended Designes; There is no footstep here of the holy mans Murmuring, Repining, Grudging
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ing or Quarrelling, at this dark and unseen way of the Lord's ordering His matters; but on the contrary we may observe, the Prophet stouping, & putting his mouth in the dust, sweetly acquiescing in, and submitting to the way, howbeit dark, unusual, and compassed with dark clouds, that infinite wisdom thinketh good to take and follow, in carrying on His Purposes, and Designes of love and mercy, to His people. *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self* &c. I see that now, would he say, that I did not observe before; and I am satisfied: I have nothing to say against it; I close with it, and am fully content it be so. Such a frame would suite us well, let the Lord take what way He will, & follow what method He thinketh good: How uncouth and dark so ever it seemeth to us; yet so far should we be from complaining, or from a quarrelling discontentedness of minde; that we should heartily, cheerfully, and with full satisfaction of soul comply therewith, in heart, mind and affection.

7. It is observable also in the holy Prophets frame, that notwithstanding of all these intervening clouds of Improbabilities & Unlikelihoods, and dark Dispen-

fations, that would seem to cover and hide the comfortable relation, that God standeth in unto his Church and People; as their Covenanted God and Saviour; yet against hope, as to humane appearances, and carnal reasoning, he beleeveth in hope; and holdeth this fast, that be His dispensations what they will, and be the outward and visible appearances of His owning of and appearing for His people, never so small and inconsiderable; yet He was, & would be, *the God of Israel, and the Saviour*. Howbeit the reasonings of flesh and blood would say, God hath forgotten to be gracious, and his Promises fail, and he will be favourable no more, as *Psal. 77: v. 7, 8, 9*. Yet he saw, that His way was in the Sanctuary, and in the sea, and His path in the great waters; and that though His footsteps could not be seen, yet He was leading his people like a flock. *v. 13: 19, 20*. Such actings of faith, in a dark day, would be of great use, & would contribute much to our Establishment; & keep us from staggering, in the day of temptation.

8. We may take notice here, in this manner of expression, of the burning of the holy mans Affections towards God; These thoughts of the Lord's Dispensations,

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ons, whereby He appeared a God like himself, did not alienate his heart from God, nor drive him further from Him; but on the contrary, they did warm his Affections more, and draw him nigher unto God; for he is uttering these his Apprehensions of God, and of His way, even unto God himself, saying, *Verily, thou art a God &c.* It is good when our Meditations of God, & of His wayes, how uncouth, strange, & unusual so ever they be indeed, or seem to be, work thus upon us, & are accompanied with a powerful attractive vertue, drawing & powerfully inclineing the heart & soul, to approach nigher unto God: And when the Lord is rightly seen, in any of his wayes, how dark soever, this will follow upon it; the heart will be more engaged unto God, & the soul will improve these meditations, to a noble advantage; and have thereby many sweet occasions of heavenly Ejaculations, and of Postings of soul toward God.

9. It is considerable also in the Prophets carriage, while he thus uttereth the whole matter of his thoughts, even in the Presence of God, and poureth forth his soul into the very bosome of God, that he was real, and single hearted, in all this Exer-

cise ; it was not a meer rational discursive Contemplation, but a real exercise of soul ; his heart was really & in very deed affected with the matter , *Verily* (saith he) *thou art a God that hidest thy self &c.* His declaring of the thoughts of his heart unto God , saith , that he was not formal , superficial, or for a fashion exercised in this case ; but was really exercised therewith at the heart ; his soul was in the meditation ; and he looked upon it , as momentous , and weighty , and as a matter of high concernment. A Formal , Superficial , Indifferent , and Cursory Contemplation of the works and wayes of the Lord , should be hateful to us ; and Uprightness , Sincerity and Reality should appear in all our wayes , and especially while musing & meditating upon the rare Passages of God's Providence : Our heart and soul should be in every thought , for the subject is grave and weighty , and of great concernment.

10. *Lastly* , It is obvious enough , that the Prophet here is in a transport of Admiration : he getteth so broad a sight of this Majestick and God-like way of carrying on His work , that he is astonished thereat , and ravished with wondering ;
and

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and therefore breaketh out, in this holy *Apostrophe* and *Ejaculation*, verily, *thou art a God, that hidest thy self &c.* Never do we get a right look of God, and of his wayes but when the sight thereof raiseth in us an high admiration and wondering; for it is no common and ordinary thing, that is to be seen in them, when they are seen in the right colours: Our not wondering declareth our sight here to be but common and superficial. It was no ordinary thing in the eyes of the Jewes, when they saw the man leaping and standing & walking, who had been lame from his Mothers womb *Act. 3: 8, 9.* and therefore *they were filled with wonder & amazement v. 10.* When David was musing upon the Lords alseeing knowledge, he cryeth out *Psal. 139: v. 6.* *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

Next, Let us consider the matter and occasion of this Transport of the holy Prophet: what is the thing, which he seeth; and what are his thoughts busied about, causing this Ejaculation? *First.* He seeth God hiding Himself, *Next* He seeth Him hiding Himself, even while He is the God of Israel and the Saviour; or he seeth Him abiding the God Israel, and

Saviour, even while His way is hid, and He will not be seen.

As to the *first* of these, *to wit*, the Lord's hiding himself, that is, bringing about the promised deliverance, and salvation to his people, in a way not discernable & obvious to the eyes and observation of every one; in a way removed from the sight of ordinary beholders; and as to them hid, dark, underground, and out of the reach of their perception; in which is a Sovereigne, Majestick, Kingly and Stately procedour to be seen by Spiritual eyes; and only by such, as can see God, while covered with clouds, and thick darkness. And this saith, That howbeit in all the wayes and works of the Lord, there is a singular, rare and divine piece of State Majesty and Glory to be seen by Spiritual observers; yet there is sometimes, in the Lords bringing about the deliverance and outgate of his People, so much hid Mysteriousness, and Majestick Imperceptibility, that saith to a gracious observer, that the Lord is hiding Himself, and carrying on his Purposes, and perfecting his Work, according to such grounds and rules of Divine Policy, that every one cannot penetrate thereinto, nor discover
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his Footstpes , nor see distinctly the hand of God, at work. As sometimes wise and great Politicians, Statsmen, and Leaders of Armies carry on their designs, in such a way , as ordinary Ionlookers shall not understand what the matter meaneth, nor what is intended, by what they see done with their eyes ; And the more they carry on their work with success in the dark , and hid from the observation of ordinary spectators, the more do they discover their great wit , and give proof of their dexterity ; in the managment of affairs of greatest consequence ; and such under-ground workings, and stratagems, carry on them a special piece of Beauty and Glory. Thus our Lord thinketh good sometimes to work , and while working, not let every one see , what he is doing ; but carry on his business, much out of sight, and under ground , and by Holy and Majestick Stratagems ; so as not only enemies shall be ignorant of what He is doing, or about to do ; but many even of his owne followers and friends shall be in the dark. So that the observation of *Job. Chap. 23: 8, 9.* is oft times found to be true, *Behold I go forward , but he is not there ; and backward but I cannot perceive him, on the left hand , where*

he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot perceive him. As also of the Psalmist, Psal. 77: vers. 19. Thy way is in the Sea, and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known.

As all the wayes, and footsteps of the Lord, are full of Majesty, and of hid and unseen Glory; and therefore must be sought out of all that take pleasure therein *Psal. III: vers. 2.* so that in all of them, the Lord is like Himself, & acteth like Himself; and every piece of them discover to a spiritual observer the Finger of God. So there are some special pieces of work, which are more signal, and remarkable, and wherein the Lords gloriously-working-hand is less obvious; and even these works, upon that very account, are in a special manner Glorious and Majestick; and of such is the truth in hand to be understood, wherein the Lords footsteps are not seen, nor known, nor observable by every one: for further clearing of which point of truth, concerning the Lord's thinking good to work; and yet to hide Himself, so as it shall not be observed by every one, that He is indeed working; we shall mention some few of these special

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al Works of God , that are thus covered with a cloud of Majesty, that every one cannot understand the Reasons of State, why such and such things are done, or suffered to be done ; nor see the connexion betwixt these Actings, and the intended Designe : As

I. When there is not only a seen and palpable disproportion , betwixt the meanes taken and followed , and the end projected or intended ; and an obvious unsutableness of the meanes used unto the designe to be carried on by them: But the Work of the Lord seemeth to On-lookers to Crosse and Counter-work the intended end. How oft is it seen, that the Works of Gods Providence seem not to run in a subserviency to the bringing effectually about of the Promises; but rather to turn head upon them, and to threaten the utter annulling of them, and rendering of them void, and of no credite? When the present Dispensations of providence are considered, and compared with the great things concerning the Kingdom of Christ promised ; who can see what rational correspondence they keep, & can observe them smiling one upon another, as fit meanes and the end would do? Nay,

who would not say, that these Dispensations do rather drive on a direct designe to defeat the Promises, who would consult with humane Reason? Is not this then a special piece of the Lord's Work, wherein He hideth himself, and thinketh good to cloath himself with State and Majesty, that every one may not be able to pry into the Depths of his Infinite Wisdom; nor see how all things are laid, and joynted together, with firme bands and ligaments, that cannot be broken or dissolved; and so have a certaine connexion, with the intended and promised good? When *Moses* was sent to deliver the People of *Israel* out of *Aegypt*, and to tell them good newes, that the Lord had visited them, and looked upon their Affliction, and would now rescue and deliver them from their bondage and slavery *Exod. 4: v. 30, 31.* the Dispensation, that immediatly followed upon the neck of that, seemed to keep no good correspondence therewith, when their yoke was made heavier, and their bondage more grievous, and their slavery and hard work doubled, by the People of *Israel* their being constrained to seek straw for themselves, without diminishing the tale of their bricks; and they hereupon,

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who formerly believed the Word of God by *Moses*, and bowed down and worshipped, when they heard the same, now made to say unto *Moses* and *Aaron* *Exod. 5: v. 21.* *The Lord look upon you and judge, because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his Servants, to put a Sword in their hand to slay us.* Yet herein was a piece of that Stately Working of God, which is full of Majesty, which the People could not see; and which *Moses* himself could not well take up, as his words to God *Vers. 22, 23.* evidence, where he saith ——— *Lord! Wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this People? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh, to speak in thy Name, he hath done evil to this People; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.*

2. When the Dispensations of God are such, as even those, whom they most concerne, & who have greatest interest in them, and are most called therefore to understand them, do not know what to say of them; nor what construction to put upon them; nor what to gather out of them, not only in particular, but even as to a more general matter; *that is*, they shall not know, whether they speak-out Mercy, or Anger in

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God towards them. This must be a singular piece of God's hiding himself, and covering himself with a cloud, that no distinct judgment can be made of what He is doing: Such was that Dispensation, which *Sampsons* Father met with: He and his Wife could not agree in their judgment, as to what they saw *Judg. 13. Manaoh* said *Vers. 22. We shall surly die, because we have seen God.* But his Wife, on the contrary, said *Vers. 23. If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a Burnt offering, and a Meat-offering, at our hands; neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would he at this time have told us such things, as these.* So as to that strange and unusual Dispensation, which holy *Job* did meet with, he did not know, what the mind of the Lord was, nor what he was intending and driving-at thereby: therefore he resolveth *Chap. 10: Vers. 2.* to say unto God — *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;* which sheweth, that he was utterly ignorant hereof.

3. When the Lord surprizeth His People with a Mercy and a Deliverance, and cometh upon them with an unexpected Out-gate; whether (1.) As to their present Frame and Fitness for the mercy and delivery;

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delivery ; Or (2.) As to their Present Hopes and Expectation. When *First*, I say , the Lord cometh with a sweet and merciful delivery unto a People, that seem to be in no present capacity for it, as being out of all good Frame or Fitness , for receiving such a mercy with advantage , because lying in their sin and impenitency ; When the Lord cometh with Salvation unto such a people , sure, his way must be covered with darkness , and hid from the eyes of Beholders , with a clothing of Sovereignty ; for who could think, that deliverance were upon its march towards such a people , who are not seeking it , nor turning from their sinful wayes , that the Lord may have mercy upon them , according to his usual Method and Order ? Such steps of Sovereignty are hid steps of Majesty , and full of Glory ; and therein the Lord is hiding Himself, and His way, coming with Salvation in an unusual path : As when he saith *Esai. 57: 17, 18.* *For the iniquity of his Covetousness , I was wroth, and smote him , I hid me and was wroth , and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart , I have seen his wayes , and will heal him ; I will lead him also , and restore Comforts unto him , and to his mourners .* Next , When the

the Lord surprizeth a people with a mercy, that they are not in Expectation of, nor Waiting for, then he acteth, like a stately King, and His Way is Glorious and hid; as it was, when the Captivity was brought back from *Babylon*, concerning which they say *Psal. 126: vers. 2. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them, that dream.* It is true, they had good ground to be now looking for their delivery, because of the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, foretelling that after Seventy Years, they should return back to their owne land; and *Daniel* understood so much, and thereupon, when the time was approaching, set himself to pray *Dan. 9.* But as to the generality, they were, in all appearance, little looking for this outgate; but rather fearing more trouble and vexation, by *Babylons* warrs with the *Medes* and the *Persians*, who were coming against them; though the name of *Cyrus*, because of what was foretold by *Esai. Ch. 44.* and *45.* might have caused them lift up their heads in hope. But notwithstanding of all this, we see, they were, (at least as to the generality and bulk of the people) little looking for an outgate, at this time; & therefore at the first report of freedom, granted.

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granted to them to returne, they were like men that dream; scarce beleeving their owne eyes and eares: At which time, while they were in this dreaming posture, how were they surprized with this mercy? And how was the way of the Lord, in His stately Marchings, hid from their eyes? In reference to this same Dispensation of deliverance to his People by *Cris*, is the Prophet here crying out thus; *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self*; as the former part of the *Chapter*, from the beginning, cleareth.

4. When Dispensations, upon the one hand, and the other, say, that in humane probability, there is no appearance, or ground of hope of an outgate, or deliverance; yet delivery cometh, in an unexpected way; how hid must the way of the Lord then be? Thus He loveth to hide Himself, in His advancing with Salvation, when there is no appearance to humane Consideration, whether mens eye be upon the Enemies, or upon the People of God themselves: As to Enemies they may (1.) Be Strong, Mighty, and Invincible, the Consideration of which might alone be sufficient to dash all hopes; as who could have thought, that the People of Israel,

Israel, being so under the feet of that mighty Monarch *Pharaoh*, could get out of his Territories, and be freed of his mighty Yoke? (2.) They may not only be strong, but prevalent, and prospering in their evil way, all things succeeding according to their mind, the Lord, as it were, shining upon their Counsels, and granting to them their hearts desire, crossing them in none of their wicked interprizes, and designs; but even suffering them to devise mischief upon their bed, and to put it the next day in execution. Was it not so with *Saul*, in his wicked persecution of *David*, oftentimes? Had he him not sometimes in a net, and compassed him about, on all hands, that there was no apparent escaping? and yet deliverance came. (3.) They may be also Crafty and Politick, and lay their traines so sure, that they may think they cannot misgive; and have all things prepared to their minde, that in a moment, they may blow up His People, that there should not so much, as a memorial of them be left; and yet be disappointed. The Lord, in an unseen way, may bring about His Peoples deliverance; so was it with the people of the *Jewes*, in the dayes of *Mordecai*, when

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when *Haman* had gote a Commission sealed by the **Kings** ring , and a Decree passed , that might not be ranversed , or recalled , the day appointed , and designed , and that by a lot , as having something like a divine approbation, Orders dispatched to put all in execution; and thus the mine¹ was ready for the springing; what hop could the poor *Jewes* then have of a delivery? And yet, behold, the *Lord was then a God , that bid himself*: He was counter-working this myne, and laying a back traine, that might cause it spring back upon the Authors; and so it did , as the *Storie* cleareth. When the Enemies thought themselves sure of their designs, and thought it impossible, that their purposes could fail; behold, the God of *Israel* , the Saviour , was hiding himself, and laying an unseen ambush, that cutt them off , who thought to have destroyed the *Jewes*. So upon the other hand, this God will bring about deliverance to his People : When upon their part , there is not one tooken for good , not one thing apparent , that can be a probable ground of hope: As (1.) When their strength is gone , and there are none shut up or left ; not a man , that might be an hopful Instrument , to the fore ; all their valiant Men ,
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and Men of Courage, and such, of whom any thing could be expected, destroyed and taken away; Yet He, who is a God that hideth Himself, can come in an unseen way, and loveth to come so; according to that gracious Word Deut. 32 vers. 36. *For the Lord shall judge his People, and repent Himself for His Servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* Was it not thus also, in the dayes of Deborah, when there was not a spear or sheild seen among Fourty Thousand in Israel? Judg. 5: vers 8. (2.) When their heart and courage is gone, they are desponding and despairing, and looking on their own case as hopeless and helpless; as it is said of the People of Judah, while in Babylon, who said Ezek. 37: v. 11. ——— *Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts.* Then, even then. when People can see no hope, He, who hideth himself, can say, *Prophecie upon these Bones, and cause breath enter into them, and bring flesh upon them, and cover them with skin, and put breath in them, that they may live* Vers. 3, 4 5, 6, 7, &c. and make them a strong Army. This is among his hid Acts, whereof he hath a rich treasure.

5. *When the meanes, which He putteth His peoples upon, in order to their deliverance*

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ance and outgate, are such as promise little or nothing, being considered abstractly; and in themselves, being very unlikely, in humane probability, to effectuate the end designed, then and therein the Lord is a God, that hideth himself: as when he commanded *Josua* and the People to compass *Jericho*, and to blow with Rams Horns, who could have thought, that that should have proven an adapted mean, for bringing to the ground the strong Walls of the City? And when *Esther* was imployed to effectuate the raveling of the decree, given out to destroy all the *Jewes*, who could think, that thereby *Haman* should have been destroyed, and all the Enemies of the *Jewes*? Who would have thought, that the stirpling, *David*, should have killed the great *Goliath*, & thereby brought about the defeate of the mighty Army of the *Philistines*? Thus oftentimes the Lord maketh use of most unlikely and improbable meanes, that the excellency of the Power, and the Glory, may be His: And He cometh thus in a dark cloud, with Salvation, without observation, that His hand may more eminently appear and be observed, and His Salvation be more conspicuous.

6. When some very hopful beginning of a good Work of Reformation meeteth with
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an unexpected stop, and impediment to retard it; this is one of the wayes, wherein the Lord chooseth, to hide Himself and His work; then is His way covered with a cloud, and His footsteps cannot be seen. Thus it was, when contrary Orders came to stop the building of the Temple, after the peoples return from captivity; as we read in the Book of *Ezra*; whereby that necessary work, so much desired, prayed for, hoped for, and with such earnestness begun, was for a considerable time retarded. Thus was it also, when *David* was about the bringing up of the Ark, out of *Kirjath Jearim* to set it in its place, in the midst of the Tabernacle, that was pitched for it; and had for this end assembled the Body of the People of *Israel*, and all the chosen Men of *Israel*, Thirtie Thousand; and was now rejoicing before the Lord, playing before Him, on all manner of Instruments; then, even then, is there an unexpected stop put to the work; for when they were advanced to *Nachons* threshing floor, *Vzzab*, one of the Sones of *Abinadab*, put forth, in his simplicity, his hand to the Ark of God, and took hold of it, for the Oxen shook it; and upon this, the Anger of the Lord was kindled against *Vzzab*, and God smote him there, for his error, and there he died by the Ark of God

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God 2 Sam. 6: vers. 5, 6. And upon this, the work is stayed; for David was afrayed of the Lord, that day; and would not remove the Ark unto him, unto the City of David; but carried it aside unto the House of Obed Edom, the Gittite, where it stayed full three Moneths, Vers. 8, 9, 10, 11. See 1 Chron. 13.

7. When even the Godly are left of God, to take such courses, as do provoke God to anger, prove stumbling blocks to the Godly, and a strengthening of the wicked, in their evil wayes; and to bring wrath upon the Land; then doth the Lord hide Himself, and hath His way in the Sea; for who can consider this Dispensation and not be astonished? Are the Reasons hereof obvious to all? Is there not something singular, uncouth, and rare, in this Dispensation? Thus was it, when the Lord left Gideon to make that Ephod, which proved a snare to him and to his House, and an occasion of sin to the Land; for it is said *All Israel went thither a whoreing after it Judg. 8: vers. 27.* And this was, when the Lord had wrought a great deliverance by him, and had subdued Midian; so that they lifted up their heads, no more. Thus also was it, when the Lord left Aaron to make that Calf, in the Wilderness, that brought so much Sin and Wrath,

Wrath upon the People, as we see *Exod.* 32. and 33. *Deut.* 9: *vers.* 8, — 21. Thus was it also, when the Lord suffered *David* to number the People, & moved him, as it is said *2 Sam.* 24: *vers.* 1. or suffered *Satan* to stand up to provoke him thereunto, as it is said *1 Chron.* 21: *vers.* 1. A deed that cost *Israel* dear; for therefore the Lord sent a Pestilence, that destroyed, in three dayes, Seventy thousand Men *1 Chron.* 21: v. 14. *2 Sam.* 24: 15.

8. So we may conceive the Lord to be a God that hideth himself, when we see wicked enemies imployed, and actively bestirring themselves, in carrying forward the Lords Work: It is true, when these Enemies are most active, in carrying on their wicked Designs, and malicious Purposes; the Lord, who overruleth all, as the great Master of Work, turneth their desperat wickedness to good, and in his Holy Wisdom, and by his Irresistible Power, maketh that contribute to His ends; and to the carrying-on of his Holy Designs; for He hath a wheel in the midst of all their wheels: and in this, the Lords way is indeed in the deep waters, so that Enemies cannot perceive this; and his own People are oft in the mist; and through unbeleefe, and faithless fear, have oftentimes unsutable thoughts of
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God, and of His Way. But the thing that we are now speaking of, is a passage of the Lords Providence, that is more rare and observable; when, *to wit*, the Lord will force and necessitate Enemies to do that, which is a manifest and plaine setting forward of His work, contrare to their owne wills and inclinations; as when the *Philistines* were constrained to send home the Ark to *Israel* againe 1 Sam. 6: This was a Majestick piece of Providence: And that, which made the way of the Lord more hid here, was this, that the Lord would rather bring home the Ark thus, than employ the *Israelites* themselves, and send them forth to recover the Ark by a glorious Victory over the *Philistines*. We would readily think, that He should rather have done this; but He is a God that hideth himself; and chooseth what way He thinketh meet.

9. The Lord manifesteth himself to be a God that hideth himself, in His workings; when in His holy Providence He delayeth, procrastineth, and suffereth His intended and promised work to meet with retarding hinderances and impediments: we would think, that when the Lord did so wonderfully and with such an outstretched arme bring the People of *Israel* out of the furnace of *Aegypt*, to the end he might make good

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His promise to *Abraham*, and put his posterity, according to His faithful word, in possession of that promised land; he should incontinent, after He had brought them thorough the red sea, and brought them to the very border of *Canaan*, have entered them into *Canaan*: Yet we see, He caused them to wander in a waste howling Wilderness Fourtie Years. Again, when He brought them over Jordan, we would think He should in all haste, with great expedition have destroyed the *Canaanites*, that in a short time *Israel* might have had peaceable possession of the whole Land: Yet we see, the Lord thought good to do otherwayes. And how many a time, doth He think good to exercise the Patience and Faith of His People; and for this end delay the carrying on and perfecting of the work He intendeth? And this He doth, not for want of strength to go over all Opposition; nor for want of Wisdom, as if he were put to new Resolutions, and to a stand, in carrying-on his old Purposes: But that he may give proof of His Majestick Sovereignty; and shew how Stately and Glorious He is in His Operations, performing all, according to the Counsel of His own will; cutting short His Work, when we might think, it could not be finished, in haste; and againe drawing
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it forth to a longer period of time, when we would think, that all things cry for His hastning of it.

10. The Lord hideth Himself, in His workings, when He suffereth Enemies at once to destroy and overthrow a work, that hath been long in building, and hath been carried-on with much trouble, toile, work and care, by prayers, fastings, and blood. We understand not, what that meaneth, which the Lord saith by *Jeremiah*, unto *Baruch* *Jer.* 45: 4. ——— Behold, that which I have built, will I break down; and that which I have planted, I will pluck up, even this whole land. But this is a piece of His working, who loveth sometimes to be a God that hideth himself. It is a sad complaint, which the Church hath *Psal.* 74: vers. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Thine Enemies roar in the midst of thy Congregations, they set up their ensignes for signes. A man was famous, according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees: But now they break down the carved work thereof at once, with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary. ——— They said in their hearts, let us destroy them together. They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the Land. Thus was there more destroyed in one Year, than was built-up in many. Is not our Lord, in such a case, a God, that hideth Himself? Who

can see thorow such a Dispensation, as this?

11. There is a time also, in which we may say, the Lord is a God, that hideth himself; and that is, when his Dispensations are so mixed and composed, to speak so, of mercy and judgment, that People shall not know, which to regard most; or what to judge of the complex Business. As it was when the Ark came to the *Bethshemites*, there was great joy, and offering of burnt Offerings, and Sacrificeing of Sacrifices, *1 Sam. 6: vers. 13, 15.* But behold, ere the day was ended, their mourning was as great as their joy; for the Lord slew Fifty Thousand and Threescore and Ten Men, because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord *v. 19* Whereupon the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten them, with a great slaughter; and they said *vers. 20. Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God; and to whom shall he go up from us?* A wonderful dispensation, wherein the Lord shewed himself to be a God, that hideth Himself.

12. We may adde to these another case, in which, the Lord may be looked upon, as one that hideth himself; and that is, when He is unwilling to make use of holy and useful Instruments, of whom much might be expected, and who would willingly spend themselves, and be spent in the service of the Lord

Lord. As the Lord thinketh good to make use of Instruments, in his work; so it is an hopeful business, when the Lord raiseth up, fitteth and animateth Instruments, for carrying on of his work; and the Lord is then appearing in His power, on the head of His work: But when He saith, by His dispensations, that He will not make use of hopful, and steadable Instruments, for beginning or carrying on of His work, then He is, as it were, hid, and his footsteps cannot be seen. Whether (1.) He expressly declareth, that he will not make use of such or such a worthy Instrument, that would gladly be Employed in the work; as when *David* did so earnestly desire to be employed in building of Gods House; yet the Lord said, he should not build Him an House: He would not have that service from him, 2 *Sam.* 7. but would employ one out of his loines for that end; and *David* must be content to prepare money and materials for the work. Or (2.) When the Lord taketh away Instruments, before their work be ended; as He did *Moses*, who would faine have passed over *Jordan*, to have seen that good Land, and have perfected his work of leading the people thereinto. Or (3.) When He suffereth worthy and eminent Instruments to be snatcht away basely and unworthily; as we

see in *John Baptist*, a man that had not a marrow that day upon the face of the earth; the only forerunner of Christ; greater then any Prophet, that was before him; and a man that had done much good; yet see how unworthily he is taken away; he is cast in prison, and at the desire of a light dancing damsel, prompted thereto by a base and unworthy harlot; and taken away in a most unworthy manner, murdered in his prison, and his head given as a propine and satisfying gift to that girl. What a wonderful dispensation was this, that the Lord should suffer them to do to this non-such and eminent man, even what they would, and list? But in these and the like workings of the Lord, He is a God that hideth himself.

We have thus declared how the Lord is a God, that hideth himself, even when He is about to do good to, and to deliver his People; and have, for further clearing and explaining of the mater, given some instances of cases, wherein the Lord may be said to be a God hiding himself. It we should now enquire, Why and for what Reasons doth the Lord choose to work so, and bring about deliverance to His people, in such an hid and unobservable manner? It should satisfie us for an *answere*. That thus
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it pleaseth Him to do, for his own glorious ends, which we may not too curiously pry into: Yet seeing all that God doth, is done in great wisdom, both for matter, and method; and for holy ends, which His word mentioneth; we may so far, with soberness and humility, enquire into these; to the end, we may be able to observe something of the wise & holy workings of God, and so be in better case, with knowledge & understanding, to carry ourselves as Christians, with a futable frame and disposition. To the *Question* then, Why the Lord thinketh good to follow this way? We answer, He doth it for great and weighty reasons, partly (1.) concerning Himself; partly (2.) concerning Enemies: and partly (3.) concerning His own People.

As to the *first*, the reasons concerning Himself, we may take notice of these.

1. The Lord thinketh good, to bring about His purposes of delivering His people, in an hid, unseen, and unobservable way, that He may shew forth the glory of his Sovereignty, who chooseth Wayes and Methods, as He pleaseth; and doth, as whatever he will, so after what manner he will, in heaven and in earth; and is not obliged to follow ordinary methods, or to walk in beaten and troden paths; but to do what

beseemeth a great King and a Royal Sovereigne, who giveth not an account of any of his matters; whose will is a law to us, and a rule (to speak so) to himself. Hence, in this same Chapter *Esai. 45.* is this so oft repeated, *I am the Lord, and none else. vers 5, 6, 18, 21.* Hereby laying down the ground of His so acting; and quieting his peoples mindes, and stilling their thoughts, concerning this matter.

2. The Lord thinketh good to trade in such an unseen way, that spiritual eyes may the more see, that *itis He*, even *He*, who is God, and there is none else; that *itis He*, *who formeth the light and createth darkness, who maketh peace and createth evil; and is the Lord, who doth all these things vers. 7.* Wherein should it appear, that *He* were Jehovah, if, in all things, he should work according to the thoughts and imaginations of men? Is not this a manifest proof of His being God, when his wayes and Actings transcend our Comprehensions? Though in all his wayes and workings, *He* is God, and worketh and doth like himself, even in such as are most ordinary and obvious; and a Spiritual eye can discern and espve something truely divine, & the marks of a divine hand; there yet when His way is in the deep waters, and his foot-steps cannot be seen, He
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acteth in a manner more like Himself, like one, who is indeed God, and whose wayes are beyond and above the reach of Men, the wisest, and holiest of Men; and then may all have ground to say, This is the finger of God, as the Magicians of Egypt said, when the Lord did somethings, which they with all their enchantments could not imitate *Exod. 8: 18, 19.*

3. The Lord chooseth this way, to give some signal proof of His *Wisdom*; if Statemen should manage and carry-on their affairs of State, alwayes in such an open and plaine manner, that every plaine and simple man, that knoweth nothing of the intrigues of state, should be able to discern their motions, designs and all their contrivances, they would not give great proof of their State-wisdom and Policy. And if a Commander and Leader of an army should so manage all his affairs, in that conduct, that the meanest souldier should be able to discover and understand all his designs, and stratagems; he should give but a fory proof of his singular dexterity in conduct. But when the Stateman, and the Commander in chiefe so carry on their projects, that few or none can well understand what their Designe and Intention is, then a demonstration is given of their Ability, Wisdom and

Accomplishment, for such places of power and trust. So when the Lord hideth His holy Purposes and Projects, and afterh so, as ordinary on-lookers will suppose & imagine that he is going East, when He mindeth to march west ward; and even many of his own will think, that He is about to destroy his work and people, when He is upon His way to raise them up, and set them on high, and to destroy the Adversarieship and thigh, then His deep and unsearchable Wisdom appeareth. Then it appeareth, that He also is wise *Eesai. 31: 2.* *Job* got a sight of this, in the Lords rare works of providence *Job. 12: 12, 13.* to the end; and therefore saith, *with the ancient is wisdom, and in length of dayes understanding, with Him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.* So *Pau!* got such a sight of this, that made him cry out *Rom. 11: 33.* *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? how unsearchable are his judgments, and his wayes past finding out?*

4. Hereby also the Lord giveth a clear demonstration of his Faithfulness and Truth. If He were carrying-on the accomplishment of his Promises and Purpos-s of good towards his people, in a visible, discernable and obvious manner, folks would have but an ordinary and cursory observation of His faith-

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Faithfulness; and their hearts accordingly would be but in an ordinary manner affected, and they moved but to praise and bless Him therefore, of course; for, remarking nothing singular, their hearts would not be raised up, above what is usual and ordinarie, to admire & extol Him, upon that account. But when he followeth another method, & taketh an unusual course, to bring about his grand designs, and such a course, as whereby Enemies might think, He did not see, nor regard, He would never come to helpe His people, the day was theirs, they should prosper, and never be moved; for there is no appearance, or probability, might they think, that ever the case shall alter, & our affairs be overturned; & upon the other hand, whereby his owne People might see no visible or probable ground of hope, that the' promises should be accomplished, & the word of the Lord should take effect; then His appearance with salvation, after he had wrought so long under ground, & out of sight, & all hop was gone from them, & fear from the enemy, is much more remarkable; & his Faithfulness shineth forth with a more then ordinary Glance and Lustre: It cometh forth then with a witness: Then they see and say, that his *faithfulness is* *unto the clouds* Psal. 36:5. that his *righteous-*

ness is like the great mountains, and his judgments are a great depth ver. 6. and that his faithfulness is unto all generations Psal. 119: 90. So that no vicissitudes, or changes here below, can alter Him; no delay of time or procrastination, or the like, can make any alteration in Him; for his faithfulness is unto all generations. Then will they praise his Truth Psal. 1: 22.

But next as to such grounds, and reasons hereof, as concerne Enemies, we may take notice of these

I. He cometh with deliverance unto His people, in a way not obvious nor observable, that enemies may appear in their own colours; and give a plaine and open discovery of the latent malice and wickedness of their heart against the People of God: If the Lord did alwayes appear openly and manifestly, in the behalfe of His owne; & let all the world see, that He owned them for His people; and would suffer none to do them harme; the malice and wickedness of many latent enemies, who can speak with their mouth smooth words, smother than butter, and softer than oile, when war is in their heart, & drawn swords Psal. 55: 21. would not appear: But when the Lord hideth himself, and goeth out of sight, then they say, as it is Psal. 71: 11. God hat's forsaken.
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ken him, persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver. Because they say in their heart, God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see; therefore their mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud; under their tongue is mischief and vanity; they sit in the lurking places of the villages, in the secret places do they murder the innocent; their eyes are privily set against the poor &c. Psalm 10: vers 8, 9, 10, 11.

2. The Lord maketh choise of this manner of way of appearing, and working for His people, that Enemies may be judicially hardened, in their wicked course of opposition to His Interest and People; & so fitted for the fatal blow of God's Justice. As it was with *Pharaoh*, when the plagues were taken off, and God's terrour removed out of sight, he became alwayes thereupon more hardened in his wickedness against God and His people; and thereafter when he saw, that the people of *Israel* were ensnared betwixt mountains and the sea, and so judged, that God had left them, or could not helpe them, then his heart was hardened unto a peremptory resolution, to pursue and take them, even through the red sea, and there the wrath of God fell upon him, and all his army.

3. The Lord carrieth on His work thus, that

that the ruine of the enemies may be the more signal and remarkable, and the hand of God manifestly seen therein, when they are puffed up with pride, and think no hand can reach them, they are beyond all hazard; no appearance is there of any thing, that can put the least demurre unto their wicked proceedings: The blow becometh the more remarkable, the more surprizing, and unexpected that it is: Such was that fatal blow, that came on *Pharaoh*, and his hostes; and on *Belshazzar*, when ravelling with his Nobles, Wives and Concubines, and profaning the holy vessels of the house of the Lord *Dan. 5.*

4. The Lord thinketh good to follow this way: That He may, the more observably, fill the faces of his Enemies with shame and confusion: therefore he he will suffer them to carry on their designs, to lay their mines close, to prepare all, so that nothing may seem to remaine, but putting fire to the traine, that they may blow up the Interest and People of God, in a moment; and when they think all is ready, give them a fearful disappointment; and withal let them see, that He, who is the watchman of Israel, hath seen what they have been doing, all that time, in secret, and hath been counter-working their devices;

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ces, and undermineing their mines, when he shall cause their mine spring back upon themselves; and thus cover their faces with shame and confusion; when they shall see, that it is the hand of God, that hath done it, defeating their plots and devices, which were laid and carried-on with such secrecy, and with such providential foresight, and rational security; that nothing but the immediat hand of God could frustrat and defeat them. Was it not so with *Hamans* device and bloody plot, to cut off all the *Jewes*? And how shamfully came he off? Thus the Lord destroyeth the wisdom of the wise *Eesai. 29: 14.*

5. The Lord taketh this way, to the end, He may shame (if it can be) those enemies from their wicked atheistical thoughts concerning Him; that they may know, that there is a God, that ruleth in the earth; a God that careth for His people, & watcheth over his Inheritance; or else, they may be rendered the more inexcusable, in the day of their appearance before God. Thus the Lord will consume such, as belch out with their mouth, have swords in their lips, and say, who doth hear? That they may know, that God ruleth in Jacob, unto the ends of Earth *Psal. 59: 7, 13.* An eminent place for this we have *Eesai. 49.* The Lord
hid

hid Himself, so that his people became a prey, and were captives; yet saith the Lord vers. 24. 25, 26. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty; or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, even the Captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered &c.* And what then? *And all flesh shall know, that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.*

6. The Lord thinketh fit to follow this way, that hypocrites, and such as are not heart friends to Him & His cause, may be discovered, may fall off, and so appear to be what indeed they are. If the Lord were alwayes appearing for His people, when ever they began to be in a strait, and visibly making bare His arme, in their behalfe, many hollow hearted & false friends would take part with them, and stay among them, and seem to love and faviour them; Therefore, that they may be made manifest, the Lord hideth himself, and appeareth not so openly for his friends; but suffereth them to fall under the feet of enemies, who oppress them, and all that take their part; which occasioneth their stepping aside, & turning away from the Truth, as not being reconciled with the crosse, nor loving Christ, and his People so, as to take a share with

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with them in the Affliction and Bondage.

How many, who appeared zealous, in a faire day, will turn about, and side with wicked and evil doers, to be free of the crosse; and when they see no foot-steps more of the Lords appearing for his Work and Interest?

On the other hand, in the *third* place, the Lord thinks good, to follow this way, for some good ends, in reference to His own people: As

1. The Lord doth thus, that he may discover the hid Corruption, that lurketh in His own people, which in a fair day, when He is upon their head, marching through the host of the Enemy, and treadeing them under foot, who oppressed His people, and kept them at under, will lye at the botome, and not appear. As (1.) *Vnbeleefe*, when the arme of the Lord is revealed, they cannot then but beleeve, That He is the Lord, and the God of his people; they cannot then have the least doubt about this: But many Doubts, Questions, Scruples and Hesitations, will arise in their soul, when the Lord's face is hid, and He appeareth not in behalfe of His Afflicted People and Interest: The Disciples did openly enough professe their faith in Christ, as the Messiah, & the Son of the living God, while
he

was with them, He working miracles before their eyes; but when once he was crucified, dead and buried, *Thomas* would not beleeve, no not though the other Disciples had told him, that they had seen the Lord; nor would he beleeve, as he said expressly himself, unless he should see, in his hand, the print of the nails, and put his finger in the print of the nails, and thrust his hand, in his side *Joh. 20: 25*. And what unbeleefe these Disciples vented, who were going to *Emmaus*, unto the Lord himself, whom they knew not, we may see *Luk. 24: 21*. and may gather from Christ's sharpe rebuke *vers. 25, 26*. *O fools and slow of heart to beleeve all, that the Prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his Glory? (2.) Fainting of heart.* So long as the shipe saileth faire before the winde, a raw sea-man will have courage enough: Men at Christ's back, who have not yet had a storme blowing in their face, will be as stout as *Peter*, who nothing doubted, but he would lay down his life for his Master; who yet, when the Lord is out of sight; and his cause seemeth to be upon the declining hand, will shrink and turn back, at a very small temptation: As *Peter* did deny his Master, and that with cursing and swearing, at the very word of
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a Damſel. (3) *Self love* is another evil, that ſuch a day as this will diſcover: Many will appear very ſelf denied, and willing to hazard all for Chriſt and His Cauſe, in a faire day, who, when a ſtorme cometh, will be unwilling enough to caſt their goods over board to ſave the ſhip: In a day, when the Lord is hiding himſelf, many will ſeek to ſave ſkin and life, by ſuch indirect courſes, as ſometime they would have been aſhamed of. (4.) *Impatience*: How doth the heart of many too often ſay little leſs, than that graceleſs King ſaid, *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I waite any longer for the Lord?* 2 King. 6: verſ. 33. Such expreſſions, as that good man had, in that dark day, do evince this ſufficiently Pſal. 77: v. 7, 8, 9. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? And will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth His promiſe fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger ſhut up His tender mercies?*

2. The Lord followeth this way and methode, that he may put his people to the trial and exerciſe of the graces of His Spirit; ſuch as theſe (1.) Their *Faith* in Him, and in His Word and Promiſe: It is no great art or difficulty to beleieve, that God will make good His promiſe, when he is, in the ſight of all beholders, moſt manifeſtly accom-

accomplishing whatever he said and promised : But for *Abraham* to beleeve, that in his seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed , and that his Seed should be multiplied , as the Stars of the Heaven, for multitude, when he had not one Child, and himself was stricken in years , his body now as good as dead , he being about an hundred Yeers old, and when *Sarahs* Womb was also dead; that was faith; then his faith appeared, while he against hope beleeved in hope, when he staggered not at the promise of God , through unbeliefe, but was strong in the faith giving Glory to God ; for he was fully perswaded, that what God had promised , -He was able also to perform *Rom 4: vers. 18, 19, 20, 21.* Againe , It was no great matter for *Abraham* to beleeve, that it would be, as the Lord had said, when *Sarah* was with Childe, & had brought forth her Son , and he was healthy and thriving; but to beleeve the accomplishment of the promise , when God said unto Him , Go offer up thy Son , thy only Son *Isaac*, there was faith, accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead , *Heb. 11: vers. 19.* Thus faith is both tried and exercised. (2.) *Patience* is also tried and exercised , when the Lord is out of sight, & seemeth to say, He will not yet come, the time is not yet come:

We oft cry out, How long will the Lord hide his face; not so much out of an earnest love and desire to see his face againe, as out of impatience *Psal 6 vers. 2.* and *13: v. 1.* and *35: 17.* and *90: 13.* *Job. 7: v. 19.* *Hab. 1: v. 2.* The Lord will thus teach his people to stand upon their watch, and upon the watch tower, till the Vision, that is yet for an appointed time, and tarrieth, shall speak *Hab. 2: vers. 1, 3.* (3.) To try and exercise their hope: for that is the fit time for the exercise of this grace, when humane appearance and probability faileth, and when the Lord hideth himself, and delayeth his coming *Rom. 8: v. 24, 25.* for usually then people are ready to say, there is no hope *Esa. 57: 10.* & our hope is lost *Ezek. 37: 11.* What is my strength (saide holy *Job Ch. 6: 11.*) that I should hope? It is good in such a case, to say, with the Church *Lam. 3: 24.* The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in Him. (4.) To try and exercise their Submission to and Dependance upon Him. That they may learne to carry as humble Children; that they may say with David, *Psal. 131.* Lord my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes loſt y. neither do I exercise my self in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely, I have behaved and quieted my self, as a Childe, that is weaned of his Mother, my sou is as a weaned Childe: And so hope in the Lord,

Lord, not arrogantly set limites unto the holy One of Israel, nor prescribe a way, that he must follow; but leave him to follow His own way and method, with due Submission and Dependance, laying the hand upon the mouth, when He is pleased to hide himself, and to take another way, then we would possibly wish, or desire. (5.) To try & exercise their *Diligence* and *Constancy*, in *Prayer* and *Watchfulness*. As when the Master delayeth his coming; so when he hideth himself, as if he were not coming, or would not come, many are ready to fall from duty, and fall a beating their fellow servants, and to eating and drinking &c. *Mat. 24: 48, 94*. Therefore the Lord will have all His People set a watching, as not knowing what houre, or after what manner He will come; and to exercise them in this duty of Watchfulness and Diligence; he will come, and not let them know of His coming, nor tell them when, or after what manner He will come.

The Consideration of this should, in general, teach all His people, as upon the one hand to guard against, and beware of these evils mentioned, which Satan and Corruption, upon occasion of the Lords hiding of His Way, and keeping Himself

under

under clouds , after the manner mentioned, doth provoke & stirre up the soul unto; so, upon the other hand, to minde & faithfully set about the Duties mentioned , which are especially called for , at such a time. But more particularly we may mention some duties , and recommend them to the practice of His People , in such a day , as this : As

I. This Dispensation calleth upon all Gods People , to be observing the Lord in all His wayes and actions, and to mark His footsteps, even when they can not be seen; to observe His stately goings, in Majestie, like a Prince , that will not walk in the view of every common Subject, nor suffer every mean person to be privie to his Secrets of State. These rare and unusual works of the Lord call for more then ordinary observation. It is a mark of graceless persons, and a sin bringing-on sad and ruineing strokes , to consider none of Gods wayes *Job. 34: vers. 26, 27.* That is a divine precept *Prov. 23: 26. My Son give me thy heart, and let thine eyes observe my wayes* shewing that this is the Duty of all the Children of God , as to observe the Precepts of God, so also his Wayes and Workings ; and that it can be performed a right only

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only by such, whose hearts are given away to God; and that it argueth an heart fixed upon, and united to God, as being a native and kindly consequent thereof. At the end of a large Historical narration of many remarkeable passages of the Lord's Providence, the holy Psalmist thus concludeth *Psal. 107. vers. last. Who so is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* Showing what the spiritually wise will do, and what advantage they will have by thus considering the singular wayes of the Lord. This Considering of the wayes, and workings of the Lord, comprehendeth these things, (1.) A beleeving that God, howbeit unseen, yet is working; though clouds hide Him out of their sight; yet they do not hinder Him from working; He is working, though we perceive Him not. (2.) A musing and pondering and dwelling on the thoughts of God and His wayes. As when the Lord saith *Psal, 50. Consider this, yet that forget God*, He presseth them to a serious meditation and pondering of what was said. (3.) A seeing and observing of a stately Majesty, in the Lords carrying on his work, after such an hid manner. (4.) A passing of a sutable and wise judgment on

on what *He* is doing, construeing all to the best. This is to consider wisely of his doing, as *Psal. 64: vers. 9.* (5.) A serious observing of every discovery or appearance, or speaking effect of the Lord's working, to the end they may speak thereof to others, and declare the **Work** of the Lord, and be confirmed in their faith and hope, and encouraged to waite.

2. In such an hiding time, when the Lord is pleased to hold Secret Councel, and to act and carry on his Stratagems, accordingly, it becometh all *His People*, to act *Faith* and *Fear*; *Faith*, to beleeve in hope against hope; and *Fear*, to stoupe and stand in awe; knowing that *He* is God, and will act like himself: How happy is it to get a sight of an Absolute, Invisible Sovereigne, when *He* is hiding himself, as a stately Prince?

3. As in a time of darkness, when his people sit in darkness, and have no light, they are called to *stay themselves upon God*, *Esaï. 50.* So in a time, wherein the Lord is walking out of sight, and no man seeth what *He* is doing, His people are called to live by faith. *Now the just shall live by Faith Heb. 10.* When was this? When he,
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who should come, was not yet come : and there was little appearance of his coming When the Vision was not yet speaking *Hab. 2: vers. 2, 3.*

4. *Waiting*, Is especially called for, at His peoples hand, in such a day ; which includeth the exercise of *Faith*, *Hop* and *Patience* ; *Faith*, to realize the thing promised, and give an objective being (as it were) to that which is not visible, in it self, nor apparent; *Hope*, to embrace, and to stretch forth the armes to lay hold on what is promised; and *Patience*, to keep the Beleever in the Possession of his soul, in the meane time. This was the Resolution of the holy Prophet *Esaïas Chap. 8: vers. 17. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the House of Jacob: And I will look for him.*

5. It is the Duty of His People in such a day, wherein the Lord is hiding Himself, and is walking and working under clouds; to be *sloping* and *adoring*; which comprehendeth these duties following, (1.) Not to quarrel with, nor to grudge, fret, nor repine at the Lords taking of this course, for the glory of his own name. (2.) To look upon and consider Him, as one, whose wayes are unsearchable, and past finding-

finding-out: As perceiving Depths that are unsearchable, in all His wayes. (3.) Upon this account, to look and consider upon His Wayes with Fear, Dread and Reverence. (4.) To beware to set limites to the holy One of Israel; or to conclude that He will not come to save His People and Inheritance, because he cometh not in the way, which we imagine He must come; as if infinite Wisdom could not finde out wayes, beyond what ever we can imagine. (5.) To have high and sublime thoughts of Him, and to speak of Him, as such an high and exalted Prince, whose wayes are out of our reach, and beyond all our Apprehensions.

6. His Children would, in such a day, labour to *live nigh God* by faith: that hereby (1.) They may be kepted from fainting, while compassed with darkness, assaulted with Satans Temptations, who then will be busie tempting Gods People, to say, there is no hope now, God hath forsaken the Earth; He will returne no more. (2.) They may be kepted from siding with the Workers of Iniquity, and from turning aside to evil courses, because there is no manifest appearance of the Lord's returning to rid His People out of thraldom, and

to break the Power of the Adversary.
 (3.) They may get some discoveries, now and then, as the Lord seeth good to grant them, of God, even while hiding himself, which may endear Him unto their soul, and warm their heart towards Him: Such as live thus by faith nigh to God, in such a day, are faire to see that, which others, living at a distance, shall not partake of. (4) They may be led of God, by an unseen hand, in such a dark day; *for the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way, Psal. 25: v. 9.* And the Secret of the Lord is with them, that fear him *vers. 14.*

We come next to speak to the *Second Particular*, which the Prophet discovered through this thick cloud: He saw this hid God to be the God of Israel, & the Saviour; and he owned him, as such; and spoke and prayed to him, as such: from whence we may observe these *Three Things*,

First, That all the darks and hidden passages of the Dispensations of the Lord about His People, do not alter or change his Relation to and Covenant-Interest in His People. A forsaking God can and will be a Beleevers God, notwithstanding thereof *Psal. 22: v. 1. My God, my God, why hast thou*

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thou forsaken me? This holdeth true of a Church, ay and while He give her a bill of divorce, and excommunicate her, after she hath proven obstinate and incurable in her wickedness: Hence we finde the Lord so often owning a wicked and sinful People, as His, as *Psal. 50: vers. 7.* *Hear, O my People, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testifie against thee, I am God, thy God:* And yet the following Verses declare how unlike to His People they were, And it holdeth alwayes true of Beleevers, who have closed a Covenant with him by faith: And that upon these Grounds,

I. The unchangableness of His purposes, which alter not, according as outward Dispensations change; but are stable as mountains, and as rocks in the Sea, that are not moved for all the motion of the sea about them, and all changes of tides; and tempests: Hence, *whom he loveth, he loveth to the end Job. 13: vers. 1.* He is no changling in his love, it is like himself, unalterable. Hence also His gifts and calling are said to be *without repentance Rom. 11: vers. 29.* And, which is very remarkable; this is spoken concerning the Lords purpose of calling home the People of the *Jewes*, who have been lying under the

weight of their own doom and imprecation; and are yet as unlike to be delivered, as ever, of whom the Apostle saith, that though as concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for our sakes, yet as touching the Election, they are beloved for the Fathers *Vers. 28.* and as a Confirmation of which, he addeth, *for the gifts and callings of God, (or the gift of the calling of God) are without repentance.* So that the purposed gifts, or intended callings of God will, and must be; the Lord not being as man, that he should repent. A Balaam, when he took up his parable, could say, *Numb. 23: 19. God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the Son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said and shall he not do? Or, hath he not spoken, and shall he not make it good?* So said the Prophet Samuel *I Sam. 15: vers. 29. And also the strength (or the Eternity and Victory) of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent.* And this abideth firme, notwithstanding that sometimes we read of Gods repentings, which is only to import the change of his outward Dispensations, sometimes to the better *Deut. 32: vers. 36. Judg. 2: vers. 18. Exod. 32: 14. 2 Sam. 24: 16. I Chron. 21: 51. Jer. 26. v. 19. Psal. 106: 45. Amos. 7: 3, 6. Jon. 3:*

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Jon. 3: vers. 10. Sometimes to the worse
Gen 6: vers. 6. 1 Sam. 15: vers. 35. And
so is spoken of God after the manner of
men, who evidence the change of their
minde, by the change of their outward
carriage, way and work. Man is a chang-
able Creature; but with God *there is no va-*
riableness, nor shadow of turning Jam. 1: 17.
Hence the Lord saith of Himself, *I am God,*
and change not. Mal. 3: 6.

2. The Covenant, in which this
Relation and Interest is offered and ac-
cepted, is an unchangable Covenant.
Hence we finde it called an everlasting Co-
venant, ordered in all things, and sure
2 Sam. 23: vers. 5. So Esai. 55: 3. and 61:
vers. 8. Jer. 32: v. 40. Ezech. 37. vers. 26.
Heb. 13: 20. It is an everlasting Covenant,
and all things, promised and held-forth in
this Covenant, are the *sure mercies of David*
Esai. 55: 3. Aſa. 13: 34. And therefore,
ſeing all the Dispensations of God, in and
about His Church and People, turn upon
this wheel, and run into this channel of
mercy, being parts or appendices of the
sure mercies of David, they can make no
change or alteration in the fountaine, out
of which they all ſpring; Water, coming
out of one & the ſame fountaine, may run in

diverse channels, some greater, and some lesse, & these channels may at length run to a great distance from other, and the water in them may not be alike clear and free of mud; and yet all this diversity, and difference, can make no difference or alteration in the spring, and wels head.

3. Nay, all those various and discrepant dispensations are but pieces and parts of that one grand designe, which the Lord is prosecuting; *to wit*, the glorifying of his great Name and Free grace, in the salvation of his Church and People through Jesus Christ: And therefore, the difference or alteration, that is apparent in & among them, is so far from giving ground, to inferre any mutation of the Lords Interest in, and relation to His people; that to a Spiritual, seeing and beleeving eye, they do the rather and the more confirme the same; because such an eye will see the connexion betwixt all these as meanes, and the great end designed; and will see, that they are all subordinat unto, and are concurring effectually, in their subordinat place, to the securing of the end intended, in which they are all meeting together, as lines in a center drawn from the circumference.

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4. Fountaine - love runneth along, in all these various dispensations, & so Modifieth, Tempereth, Qualifieth, and Ordereth them, that they can make no breach upon that firme and everlasting Relation; nor work any substantial change in the State and Condition of His people: Scourges and Chastisements are not a casting out of the house, and a disinheriting; but flow from, and are qualified by fatherly love and care, whatever the witless child suppose, or imagine: *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son, whom he receiveth, Heb. 12. 6. Prov. 3. 12.*

5. So is it contracted, in the Covenant of Redemption, betwixt Jehovah and the Mediator *Psal. 89: 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, If his children forsake my Law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments. Then will I visite their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes: Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* The accomplishment therefore of this Article of that Covenant, is rather a proof and confirmation of its stability, and inviolableness; and conse-

quently of the permanency of the Relation and State , than of any change and alteration in the same ; and all the changes of the dispensations of the Lord towards his People , should rather confirm them , in the faith of this, than raise doubts or jealousies in their minds.

From whence, by way of Use, we may see , how reprobable many even of the Children of God are , who measure Gods love , by these outward dispensations ; & accordingly are up or down, in their hops and joyes , as these alter to the better , or to the worse. We do not hereby meane, that they should not be suitably affected with the various dispensations of the Lord, in and about them; we do not presse a stoical insensibility , which is but a stupidity; for on the contrarie we say, it becometh them well to weep , when the bridegroom is away , as to rejoyce while he is present. When the Lion roareth they should fear and tremble *Amos. 3: 8*. When the Lord is angry , they should bear his indignation , because they have sinned *Micah. 7: 9*. But the thing here reprov'd is their construing of Gods Minde , Affection and Covenant-Relation towards them, according to these outward dispen-

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sations, and the hideings of himself, like a foolish childe, that would think the Mother had forsaken him and cast him off, each time that she were out of sight, or set him out of her armes : So that the thing here reprovabable, is their drawing wrong Conclusions from these outward changes ; such as these. (1.) God hideth Himself, therefore His heart is changed, and He is no more their Father ; His love is altered. His Grace, Favour and Promises fail. (2.) God hideth Himself, and they see Him not ; therefore all are undone, there is no more hope, we are cut off for our parts ; as *Ezekiel. 37.* (3.) God hideth Himself ; therefore we are cast out of the Covenant, our state is changed, we have no more any place in his favour, or room in his love ; we are in the state of the dead. (4.) The Lord hideth Himself, & is out of sight ; therefore all that He hath done formerly, and we looked upon, as His work of grace & love, have been but delusions, and not his work in very deed. (5.) The Lord hideth Himself ; therefore His cause shall be destroyed, His work shall never be perfected ; His enemies shall never be overthrown. (6.) The Lord hideth His face, and appeareth not ; There-

fore our Salvation is desperat , and hope-
less. These wrong Conclusions & the like
are justly reprovab^{le}, & argue a wrong &
perverse consideration of the Dispensations
of the Lord , quite contradictory to the
Truth here asserted; & therefore should be
seriously guarded against, & such thoughts,
when they enter the soul , & occupy the
mind, should be rejected & dismissed with
abhorrence, as temptations, and irrational
and antievangelick suggestions of Satan.

Next , We may hence learne , how to
answer , and with grounded reason repel
the forementioned sinful Suggestions , &
false Insinuations, when the Devil assault-
eth us therewith , to trouble our Peace,
marre our Joy , brangle our Hope , and
weaken our Confidence ; & thereby bring
us, into a Fainting, Misbeleeving, Des-
ponding and Heartless Disposition of Spi-
rit : For whatever the outward dispensa-
tions of the Lord be, His Covenant stands
fast , and His Covenant-relation abideth
the same , and His heart and love abideth
fixed and unchangable , His purposes al-
ter not , His thoughts take place in all ge-
nerations, how great so ever the difference
be , betwixt the one and the other , as to
His dispensations in them. And the fixed
faith

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faith of this would prove a notable preservative against fainting and faithless fears, and would Strengthen, Support, and Uphold the heart, in the midst of all these contrary waves; this would be good & fast ground, whereon the soul may ride at anchor safely, in the midst of all these stormes, and horrible tempests.

Thirdly, Hence we see the great advantage of the people of God, who have cut a covenant with the Lord (as the Scripture phrase is) and are become His, and have an interest in Him, as theirs; Let the Lord's dispensations outwardly be never so dark, and sad, and such as those, who are utter strangers to the Scriptures, and to the Lord's way of dealing with His people, would interpret to be manifest evidences, and demonstrations of God's off casting; yet they may sing with the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and say, *Although mine house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow* 2 Sam. 23. 5. O how great is this advantage, that they may by faith read love in His heart, when anger seemeth to flow out of His hands? And that his Interest

in , and relation to His people , & theirs to Him againe , abideth firme and unshaken , notwithstanding of all the outward fore and sharpe passages of his providence. What Joy , Peace and Comfort may the thoughts of this yeeld unto His sad hearted people , when troubled , at the consideration of His sharpe dispensations?

Fourthly , Here is likewise great encouragement , and a strong motive to enduce and perswade unto a closeing of a Covenant with God : And Oh , that all , who are as yet strangers hereunto , would at length be moved to lay hold on Him , while his armes are stretched out to welcome & embrace all , who will come.

Secondly , We may hence observe , That there is a discovery to be had of the standing relation betwixt God and His people , even when the Lord hideth Himself : For the Lord was now hiding Himself , or appearing as such unto the Prophet ; and yet the Prophet saw him withall , to be the God of Israel , and the Saviour. In the former point , we saw , That the relation betwixt God and His people doth stand , notwithstanding of the Lords hiding of His face ; and not appearing openly by acts , futable to such a relation . But
though

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though this be so; yet His people may want the heart-confirming sight thereof. And now in this point, we hear, That His people may be helped unto this sight and discovery; even in such a day, wherein the Lord hideth Himself. And that.

1. When the Lord leadeth them in by Faith, to see His unchangeable Nature, Purposes and Decrees; as also his Truth, and unchangable Word; together with the other Particular grounds of this unchangableness in Gods Relations towards His people, formerly mentioned; the hand of God must lead them in to this secret chamber, where, discovering the Lord, and His way with His people, they see his heart abiding the same, however His face may frown, & robes may be in His hands. Now when faith getteth right apprehensions of God, and winneth to a right discovery of Him, they see this connexion, that otherwise would be dark and questionable; and they see a reality and subsistence in the promises.

2. The Lord helpeth them to see thorow the dark cloud, and the black dispensation, and to read, what is written on the backside thereof; or what standeth behinde

behinde the courtine of the present sad dispensation : And then they discover Faithfulness and Unchangableness in God, & Love, Truth & Mercy in all his dispensations.

3. The Lord blunteth the edge of the temptations of Satan; and lets His Child see the unreasonableness of what is objected, & the absurdity of the Inference, that Satan and corrupt Reason would make, & draw from the Lords way of procedoure : Yea, he helpeth them to draw the contrary Conclusions, and that upon certaine & approved grounds, confirmed by manifold experience.

4. The Lord discovereth unto them the firm connexion betwixt these saddest and blakest Dispensations, and the faire Promises, and the noble Outgate, that is coming to His people : And then they cannot but see him to be Israel's God, even when He hideth Himself.

5. The Lord thinketh good sometime to give, in the darkest day, and in the darkest houre of the night, some glimpses of His glory, in behalfe of His People; to shew, that He is not altogether unmindful of them; that He is not far away; and that He is about His work, and carrying

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rying it on to His glory, & to their good: And this confirmeth their faith in His abiding the same, whatever His dispensations be.

This should let us see, as upon the one hand, the great goodness and condescendency of God, who will lout down and help his weak people, who are desirous to fear him, and to walk honestly before him, in a dark day; and will set a prospect to their eye, whereby they may see, as *Moses* did from the top of *Pisgah*, the promised land, and that great ground of Joy and rejoicing, that the Lord hath not forsaken His people; so upon the other hand, it should point-out our duty, to wit, to be living nigh God, even while He is hiding Himself; and pursuing after an hid God; to the end, He may lead us, while we are in the dark, and hold us by our right hand, that we stagger not through unbeleef and fall; but may be helped, through his grace, to a sight of Him, as the God of His people, even when He hideth himself; whereby we should have many advantages. As

i. This sight of God, in such a day, as it would set us with earnestness to pray; so it would encourage us to continue instant

stant in prayer, knowing that the return would come in due time; seeing the Lords mind were not altered, His affections remained the same, & His relation to & Interest in His people was not changed; & therefore He would hear and helpe in due time.

2. This sight would strengthen the child of God unto all Patience in waiting, when he saw, that the Lord would come, and that the coming of the Lord drew nigh, he would waite, and stablish his heart in waiting, as the husband man waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth *Jam. 5: 7, 8.* And by this patience, as he would establish his heart, as this place of *James* sheweth, so he would possesse his soul *Luk. 21: vers 19.*

3. It would also strengthen, fortifie & confirme their hope: for faith, discovering this sight, would make the soul stretch its hands thorow the dark cloud, to grip the glorious promises, lying hid in the other side, and embrace them. Those worthies mentioned *Heb. 11.* though they did not receive the promises, yet having seen them a far off, & being perswaded of them, they are said to have embraced them *vers 13.*

4. This

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4. This would keep up their head, and cause them sing in hope, they would rejoyce in the midst of their Affliction; and notwithstanding of all the present and apparent impossibilities, in the way of the Lords return, & of recovering his work; they yet would rejoyce with joy unspeakable & full of Glory; because they would see, the Lord would come, *and subdue Nations, and loose the loins of Kings, and open the two leaved gates, and break in pieces the gates of brasse; and cut asunder the bars of yron* Esai. 45: 1, 2.

But if it be said, When the Lord is not pleased to lead poor beleevers, into these secrets, in a dark night; nor grant them the use of such a lanterne, whereby they may see their way; nor such a discovery of the grounds of the immutability of this Relation; what can poor beleevers do in that case? The answer lieth in that, which we may

Thirdly, Observe from these words of the Prophet, as pointing forth the duty of the people of God, in such a case, after the Prophets example; seeing for this end this is here set down, *to wit*, That in a day, wherein the Lord is hiding Himself, as to the way of bringing about the promised

promised salvation, and out-gate of His Church and People, it is the duty of all beleevvers, to be asserting this Relation of the Lord's to, and interest in His Church and People, as their God and Redeemer; and to be closeing with Him and griping to Him, as such, let dispensations seem never so manifestly to speak out the contrary, & be never so discouraging to them, in that adventure: For we see the Prophet (and doubtless this was left on record, for our instruction, in the like case, and while under the same circumstances) even while he is beholding and considering God, as hiding Himself; laying hold upon Him, as Israels God, and as the Saviour; and asserting this as a Truth; to which he would stand, & which he would owne, let matters go as they would. This doth includethese things.

1. That in such a day, as this, which was mentioned, the People of the Lord, should look upon it, as their duty, to Professe, Declare, and Avow, that the Lord is Israels God, keeping fast His Relation; and Close with Him, Grip to Him, Accept of Him, and Adhere to Him, as such.

2. That in such a day specified, they should

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should certainly expect, that he will answer that Relation, and be indeed a Saviour: And Salvation should be looked for from Him alone, & none else; & from no other airth. *Thou art the Saviour.*

The *first* of these is manifest from these Particulars.

1. That no dispensation we meet with will warrand His people to have mistaking thoughts of Him; or to stand aback from laying hold on Him: For they are not sent for that end; but rather to drive them nigher to him, and to urge them to a more firme and fixed adhering to Him. Windy blasts will not cause us hold a more careless grip of our cloaks, but rather cause us hold them faster.

2. The darker the dispensation be, our need of holding Him fast is the greater; and so our call the more loud;

3. This is the way, to get the sanctified use of such Dispensations; and to win to the right improvement of them: And without this, we cannot carry aright under these and the like dispensations.

4. This is the proper season for Faith to bud and appear in, and to bring forth Fruit: And this is the native and kindly exercise of Faith, in such a day.

5. This

5. This is the only way to get a right frame of Spirit, under such a dispensation; and to carry as beleevers ought to do.

6. This is the only way to be kept stedfast, faithful, and unmovable, in that day of darkness; and without this, the soul is exposed to all the tempestuous on-sets & blasts of the Enemy. Hereby noly is the beleever kept fast anchored on the rock, that will not fail.

The *second* Note is likewise clear upon these grounds.

1. Because in such a dark day, Faith should be exercised, and that is the proper season, wherein faith should appear, and should grow; that is, as it were, the soil, wherein faith should bring forth fruit. When the knife was at the throat of *Isaak*, the Son of the promise, and the first and only sprout and appearance of that seed, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed; yet *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, beleaved, that God was Faithful and True, and would be his Salvation.

2. Thus the Lord is glorified, when, blow stormes as they will, and temptations to a despereing & desponding of heart, be never so multiplied, & motives to seek salvation
and

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& an outgate by sinful and, unlawful wayes and meanes, doubled; yet the soul is fixed, on Him, and on Him alone, and will say, *As shur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, — but in God alone, the fatherless findeth mercy* Hof. 14: 3.

All which may discover our sinful and unsutable frame, in such a dark day, when the Lord is, in **Glory** and Majesty, sutable to Himself, carrying on His work, out of our sight, and is hiding Himself, that we cannot see him, nor know what he is doing; so may it point forth our duty, and teach us, what to think, and what to do, in such a day. And to this end, we may hence learn in particular, to minde those duties following.

1. In such a day, wherein the Lord hideth Himself, we should beware of entertaining any jealous thoughts of Him: Satan will then be busie, to muster up all the Arguments and Grounds he can, to cause Beleevers, at least, turn jealous of God; and to doubt, if He will appear any more for Zion, to the end they may faint, and give over Faith and Hope; and then he hath gained his point; and Beleevers in such a day, may expect this, and feare their own hearts, that will be too ready
to

to comply with all Satans Motions and Suggestions: This therefore would be carefully guarded against.

2. In such a day, the unchangable Purposes of God, His faithful Word and Promises should be the subject of our Meditation; on these should we dwell, and ruminate; to the end, our heads may be kept up in hope, and we may not despond.

3. We should beware to make the day darker, by sinful departing from God, and by giving way to Satans Temptations: When folks in a dark night are walking among snares and pits, they will set down their feet with great warriness and circumspection: so should we do, in such a day, lest we make our Condition worse.

4. We should observe narrowly, what we can mark, in the Dispensations of the Lord, that will say and evince to us, according to the grounds of spiritual reasoning, that God is about His work; and that, though we see Him not, yet He is working under ground, and carrying on His projects; to the end, we may be confirmed in our hope, and strengthened to waite, with patience and faith.

5. We should minde our duty, what-
ever

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ever He do ; for that is it we are called to, and so much the rather, that the Lord hideth Himself, should we be diligent in unquestionable duties ; for *He meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness* Esai. 64:v. 5.

6. We should beware to limite the holy One of Israel; let us rather stoupe and adore, and acknowledge Him to be Jehovah, who doth what He will.

The *Third* thing considerable in these words of truth, is, what is imported by that word *Verily*: And it would seem, to point out to us these particulars following, which I shall but mention.

First, That it is no light, or easie matter, to win to the faith, and to the sight of this by faith, That God is the Lord, and the God of Israel, and the Saviour, when He hideth Himself : For this ejaculation seemeth to have been, or is so here expressed, as if it had been the issue and result of some great inward wrestling, out of which, when the Prophet getteth up his head, he cryeth out, *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thyself*, &c. And considering, the frame of our heart by Nature, and the subtilty
Q of

of Satan, and his skill and diligence to muster up all Considerations, in such a day, to our disadvantage, this difficulty cannot but be great.

Secondly, That this truth is of great moment, being here confirmed by such an asseveration: It is a truth, useful, and necessary to be beleaved and fixed in the heart: For it is attended with great advantages, and the want of the faith of it, is not only sinful, but most hurtful and dangerous; being accompanied with many sad evils, and being the cause of dreadful effects and consequences.

Thirdly, That this Truth should be fixed, in our hearts, as a great and fundamental point, and put beyond all doubt, or dispute with us, that *He is a God, that hideth Himself, the God of Israel, and the Saviour*.

The *Last* Particular here considerable, is the Prophets uttering this Matter to God, and speaking thus to Him, *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself &c.* Which pointeth forth to us these things.

First, The sincerity and uprightness of heart, in the Prophet, who could thus speak unto God, and lay the matter before Him, as it was; Which should teach us to
be

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be honest, sincere, and upright in all our carriage, free of deceit and hypocrisie.

Secondly, The reality of this his Exercise, and outgate; for it was no made and supposed thing, but real: To teach us so to carry.

Thirdly, That the Prophets heart was more warmed unto God, and that this was the result of his exercise, in his meditations, that his heart was drawn nigher unto God; for now he uttereth the matter, in the very bosome of the Father. It is well, when our exercises have this issue and outgate.

Fourthly, His open Profession of this matter, was to exalt and glorify God; for herein is a piece of solemn worship performed unto God; which pointeth forth our duty, in the like case.

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CONSIDERATION XXI.

No man can make straight
what God hath made
crooked.

ECCLES. VII: V. 13.

*Consider the Work of God ; for who can
make that straight , which He hath
made crooked ?*

IN a day , wherein the People of God are persecuted and afflicted for His sake and cause , it were a great help and advantage unto a christian and sutable carriage under that dispensation , to have right and sutable thoughts of God , and of His divine works. In such a day , we fancie and imagine many things amiss , in the Providential Workings of God , many things we think we see , that might be helped , and if we had the disposal of matters , in our hand , shou'd be quickly redressed ; and thus being led away with our own proud hearts , and insensibly carried down the strame , we fall a censuring of the holy Way of the Lord , and a quarrelling with Him , because He doth not rectifie

work can no man make straight. 365

ctifie matters, according to our mind, and doth not governe the world, or, at least, the Church, according to our wishings and wouldings. Now because this frame of spirit is so repugnant unto the Holy Will of God, so unsutable unto the Children of God, so hurtful unto the Soul, and such an Enemie unto the right deportment of Souls. in the day of Crosses and Affliction, it will be of use to to speak some thing (if the Lord will help) to rectifie our mistakes, and to cure us of these Distempers.

We think we see many crooked Passages, in God's Way and Dispensations with the Church, and with ourselves in particular; and we imagine also, we know wayes how to set all these crooke even; But this is really a clear demonstration of our follie: For the Wise man telleth us here, that no man can help any thing, that they suppose God hath made amisse; or make any thing straight, which God hath made crooked, *who can (saith he) make that straight, which He hath made crooked?*

Among severall other wholsome Instructions, which *Salomon* giveth us, in this penitential discourse of his, this is one, That we would Consider the Work of God, that is, Take notice of what He is doing and working, ponder upon His works, Me-

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dictate upon them, and dwell on the thoughts thereof, and lay to heart His Providential disposal of all Things, Actions and Events; and His ordering and manning of them all to His own Glory, and according to His own mind and absolute will and pleasure: And that so, as to acquiesce in what He doth, to rest satisfied with it, and to comply heartily and cheerfully therewith, in all points, without Murmureing, Fretting, Repineing or Quarrelling. And He addeth a Reason; (which is that we are here mainly to speak to;) *for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?* This question is an emphatick negation of the thing; and is as much, as if he had said, it is absolutely Impossible, that any Creature, Man or Angel, can make straight, what God hath made crooked. They cannot Counter-work the Lord; they cannot undo what He hath done; they cannot amend what they suppose is made or done amisse.

This He had said before Chap 1: vers. 15. *that which is crooked cannot be made straight.* And here He maketh this Improvement of it, and as it were draweth this use from it; That we should consider the Works of the Lord; as if He had said, The Consideration of this, that no man can make any thing straight, that they suppose God hath

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hath made crooked , should move us to comply with , and contentedly acquiesce in whatsoever God doth under the Sun, by His mighty Power , and according to His unchangable Purpose and Counsel , and to the everlasting determinations of His holy will.

These words give ground to enquire

1. What are those crooked things, which God hath made ?

2. How and why it is, that these crooked things cannot be made straight by one or other of the Creatures ?

3. What way we should , upon this account , Consider the *Works* of God ? or what Improvement we should make of this Impossibility of helping , what we suppose is amisse , in the Lord's Works of Providence ?

Asto the *first* , VVe may not suppose , that , to speak properly , any thing , that God doth , is crooked ; but our corrupt unsatisfied mindes look upon many passages of God's All-ruling and All-disposing Providence , as crooked , and as such as we would faine have altered , if we had our wills. Some of which we can onely mention , and these we may reduce to two Heads,

1. Touching some things, that are more controverted.

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2. Touching some things, that are less controverted.

As to the more controverted, we shall mention only these following,

1. Not only do our hearts rise up against the Holy and Sovereigne Acts of Gods will, in choosing whom He would unto eternal Life, and in passing by others; as we see *Rom. 9.* Corrupt Reason, that will not submit unto the Lord and His wayes, spurneth against that saying, that *God hath mercy on whom He will; and Jacob have I loved &c. Vers. 13, 15.* and responseth against God, objecting, upon this account, unrighteousness unto the just and holy One of Israel *V. 14.* But also against His holy Executions of these His Holy and Sovereigne Decrees. *Paul* had concluded, that God had mercy on whom He would, and hardened whom He would *Vers. 18.* And corrupt Reason will againe carp, and say, *If so, why doth He yet finde fault? For who hath resisted His will? Vers. 19.* Unto which the Apottle must returne a sharp and silenceing answer, *Vers. 20, 21, 22, 23.* Nay, but O Man, who art thou, that repliest (or disputest) against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the Clay, of the same lump; to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? &c.

2. So

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2. So in the matter of the Lord's dispensing the meanes of grace, and the Gospel, we wonder at the Lords Way, and cannot understand how it is, that He should hide this Mysterie from Ages and Generations *Col. 1 vers. 26. Ephes 3: v. 9.* should send the Gospel to one place, and not unto another; and why He should forbid the Apostles to goe preach the good newes of Salvation in *Asia* and in *Bithinia* *Act. 16: vers. 6, 7,* Why He should continue the Gospel long with one people, and remove it quickly from another, and Non-church them: And why one Nation and People should enjoy the meanes of grace for many ages; and others, for many ages, never once have a report of Salvation through Christ, but be left, from one generation to another, in blackness of darkness, in woful Idolatry and Ignorance. This piece of the Lord's work seemeth so crooked, and so unlike to, and incorrespondent with, or repugnant to the attributes of God, as to His Mercy, Loving Kindness and Goodness, unto some, that they, to make up this supposed gap, and set right this crook in the Lords way, feigne and imagine an Universal Objective Grace; or an Universal Gospel; that is, that God hath given to all Nations, how barbarous so ever, those meanes of Grace and Salvation,

Q 5 which

which, if they would improve aright, would prove saving; and so must imagine, that the Sun, Moon and Stars, Raines and fruitful Seasons, and other works of Creation and Providence, do preach out that Myserie of Salvation through a crucified Christ, contrare to Scripture, and to all Sense and Reason; or that there is another way to Salvation, than by faith in a crucified Christ; which is also contrare to the Scripture *Act. 4: vers, 12.* Thus the *Arminians*, and *Semi-Arminians* and *Quakers*, think to make this crooked work of God straight; but invaine. We should rather minde that, which *Paul* hath *Rom. 11: 33.* after he had spoken of the rejection of the Jewes, and the Lord taking-in the Gentiles, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdome and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his wayes past finding out! Vers. 34. For who hath known the minde of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellour? Vers. 35. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him againe? Vers. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* And minde the purpose of God here, *Ephes. 1: v. 8, 9, 10. and 3: 9, 10, 11.*

3, The way of the Lord, in this matter, seemeth so crooked to *Pelagians*, and their
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followers, *Arminians*, *Socinians* and *Quakers*, with *Papists* and *Jesuites*, that all this contrivance of an *Universal Objective Grace*, or an *Universal Gospel*, will not satisfie them, nor be enough, in their apprehensions, to set this crook even; but they must further assert an *Universal Subjective Grace*; that is, Grace and Power granted to every One, to hearken to the voice of God calling in Nature, and in the Gospel, to convert and turne themselves, to believe and repent, if, and whensoever they will; because they see not, how it is consistent with Gods Wisdom and Goodness, to require any duty of man, but what he giveth him full ability to performe, not regarding the stock of strength, that was once given to man, and was dilapidat by *Adam*. But, as to this, how crooked so ever we suppose it to be, we must rest here, that the *Carnal mind is enmity against God*; for it is not subject to the *Law of God* neither indeed can be *Rom. 8: vers. 7*. And that the *natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned *I Cor. 2: v. 14*. and that *Faith is the gift of God*. *Ephes. 2: v. 8*. And that it is *God that worketh in us both to will and to do*, according to his own good pleasure *Phil. 2: vers. 13*. And that *Christ is a Prince exalted to give Repentance*.

pentance. *Act. 5: v. 30* And that God is a free Dispenser of His grace, as being obliged to none, and shewing mercy to whom he will.

4. That work of the Lord's covenanting with *Adam*, as the Head, in the name of all mankind; and his imputing his sin unto his posterity, who were in his loines, so that all become borne and conceived in sin, and obnoxious to the wrath of God, because of that transgression of *Adam*, according as the Apostle speaketh *Rom 5 vers. 12.* *Wherefore, as by one mans sin entr d into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* And againe *Vers. 14.* *Nevertheleß death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adams transgression.* And *Vers. 18.* *Therefore as by one mans offence (or by one offence) judgment came upon all men to condemnation.* This Dispensation, I say, seemeth so crooked to some, such as *Pelagians, Socinians, Arminians and Quakers*; that they must absolutely deny it; and say, there is no such thing as original sin, though *Paul* saith *Ephej. 2: vers 3.* ——— that we were by nature (including himself) *the Children of wrath*; And *David* telleth us, in his humble Confession of sinne to God *Psal. 51 ver. 5.* *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did*
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my Mother conceive me. And Job sayeth Chap. 14: v. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.* And to the same purpose Bildad Job. 25: v. 4. ——— *How can he be clean that is borne of a Women?*

5. For further setting even, what other-
wayes men think crooked, in the way of
the Lord, they imagine, assert and defend
an Universal Redemption; saying, that
Christ hath died for all; equally, say some;
with some difference, say others: because
it seemeth a crooked thing with them, and
inconsistent with the Nature and Goodness
of God, not to seek the Salvation of all,
and not to prepare meanes of life for all, &
so not to send Christ to die for all and every
mothers son; though we be plainly enough
and expressely told in Scripture, that the Fa-
ther gave not all to the Son to redeem, but
some; and that Christ laid down His life a
ransome for those alone, who were given to
him to save, and of whom he must give an
account to the Father, as having undertaken
to redeem them from Hell, Wrath, Satan
and all their Enemies; and by His Power,
and Grace to bring them saife home at
length, as being their Head, their Hus-
band, their Shepherd, their Cautioner,
their Lord Ransomer, their Intercessour,
and Advocat with the Father; and that

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these are an *all*; and called the *world*, to point out their natural Original, that Grace may the more appear to be grace; and to point out their being scattered through the world, and taken out of all Kindreds, Tongues, Nations, People, Languages; especially now under the Gospel, in distinction from the dayes of the Old Testament, when the *Jawes* were only the peculiar people of the Lord, and in *Judah* only was God known, and his name great in *Israel*.

6 Further to make God's supposed crooked wayes straight, the Enemies of the free Grace of God imagine. that the will of Man must be left Free, to be Lord of all, and absolute disposer of the decrees and purposes of God of Redemption, and of Salvation; so that the Lord must not by an Irresistible Power draw any home to Christ, contrary to *Ioh. 6: 44*. Nor create in any a new heart, and take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh, contrare to *Ezech. 11: 19*. and *36: 26, 27*. Because they cannot see, how it can consist with Gods Love to mankind, to preferre one to another; they imagine that God layeth the matter alike to all mens door, standing equally and knocking at every mans door; and so leaving it to them alike to choose or refuse,

work can no man make straight. 375

to become happy or miserable , as they please ; and so they say , that when God hath done all He can or will do , to save people , their will is at perfect freedom to accept or reject the Grace of God , and that there is no special saving work of grace upon the heart of one , more then of another. O what real crooked work do foolish men make here ! How do they darken , deforme and make crooked the glorious straight work of the free grace of God , wherein absolute Sovereignty , glorious Grace , and the free Mercy of God shineth forth with such a Sovereigne Lustre, Beauty and Glory ? *Paul* had other thoughts of the matter , when he said *Ephes. 1: vers. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.* *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ , who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Celestials , in Christ ; according as he hath chosen us , in him , before the foundation of the world , that we should be holy and without blame before him in love , having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself , according to the good pleasure of His will. To the praise of the Glory of his grace , wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved Son.*

7. To save this same *Diana* of Free will , the same Persons do deny the Free and Absolute Decrees of God , touching any thing
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to be done by Man, whether good or evil; because they cannot see, how God's Absolute Decrees, concerning this or that, can consist with the free Actings of mans will, & not impose an absolute necessity on man to do, or not to do, according to what is decreed; as the stone must absolutely and naturally move down-ward, and the Sun shine, and all Natural causes act and work; therefore to make this supposed crook straight, they see no other way, but to deny all such Decrees, and Purposes in God; not knowing, that as God's decrees determine the event, so they determine the manner of the events falling out; that Natural Causes shall produce such an event naturally and necessarily, and Free and Contingent Causes shall inevitably produce such an effect, but freely and contingently, according to their Nature: as that the *Jewes* should kill Christ, and do what they did against him; but yet through no necessity of nature, but freely and of their owne accord, out of malice and enmity; as also that the souldiers should pierce Christ's side, and not break a bone of Him, and all that most freely, without any compulsion, or constraint upon their wils: Whereby we might see, if we were compliant with the holy Will & Workings of God, that the decrees
of

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of God are so far from everting & destroying the Liberty of the will of man, that, on the contrary, they establish, & confirme the same. But let men imagine it to be never so crooked, we must hold by this, That God did from all eternity freely & unchangeably ordaine whatsoever comes to passe, even the most contingent things *Act. 2: 23.* *Eccl. 4: 27, 28. Prov 16: 23.*

8. So to make the wayes of God straight and even, which otherwise men imagine would be crooked, Some, as our *Quakers*, with others, imagine that People may be saved, that never heard of Christ, by yeelding Obedience to the law and light of Nature, or by following the guide of the works of Creation and Providence, or a Light within them, as they speak: But what their condition is, who are without Christ, the Scripture sufficiently sheweth *Ephes. 2: 12.* — — *they are strangers from the Covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* And that the light of Nature can only helpe to make Persons without excuse *Rom. 1: 20.*

But passing these and the like, which are mater of controversie, let us mentione some others of God's works, which men suppose to be crooked: As

1. When it is as *Eccles. 8: 14.* *There be just men*

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men to w^hom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and againe there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the righteous; that is, when as to the outward things in the world, It is just otherwise as we would think should be; the wicked prosper, and their eyes stand out with fatness, they increase in riches, and have more then they could wish, they are not in trouble, nor plagued as other men, and there are no bands in their death, as it is *Psal. 37: 3, 4, 5, 12.* And upon the other hand, the Godly man he is oppressed with Poverty and Affliction, plagued all the day, chastened every morning. This was such a rugged and uneven path, that the honest Man of God *Asaph* could not hold his feet in it; but was like to fall and break his neck, concluding that it was in vaine to minde piety; *verſ. y* (said he *verſ. 13.*) *I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in Innocency.* And such a crook was this, that he could not get it set straight, till he went into the sanctuary of God *verſ. 17:* This mistake made *Jobs* friends go so wilde, in their reasonings against him; and to conclude him an hypocrite, because he met with such hard outward dispensations at the hands of the Lord; for they could not see, how God should deal with a Godly man, as He dealt with *Job*; that was so
crooked

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crooked a piece of work, that they thought God would never have made it. But *Job* understood the matter otherwise, and told them *Chap. 9: 22. This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked* So *Ch. 12: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.* he enlargeth upon this theme.

2. When it is as *Eccles. 4: 1. So I returned and considered all the oppressions, that are done under the Sun, and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressours there was power, but they had no comforter.* That is, when the innocent are oppressed in their Name, Goods, Rights, and Person, and made to cry out bitterly because of their oppression; and yet have none to take their part, or helpe them, or speak comfortably unto them; nor power to helpe and relieve themselves: but on the contrary, their oppressing enemies have power and might enough, to bear them more downe, & oppresse them. This seemeth a crooked piece of work, and yet the Lord hath so ordered matters, that it is oft so with the innocent. We see what *Job* was made to say *Chap. 6; 14. To him that is Afflicted pity should he shew from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty, I. my Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, as the streams of brooks they passe away.* And How
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Habbakuk looked upon this Chap. 1: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man, that is more righteous than he? And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them &c.* This seemeth to many to be a very crooked passage of Providence, and they think: the judge of the whole earth should order matters otherwise, and not a few are stumbled hereat, and tempted to think, that God hath forsaken the earth.

3. When it is as *Eccles. 7: 15.* — there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness; and there is a wicked man, that longeth his life, in his wickedness. This seemeth also a crooked passage in the Lord's way & Work, to many, who look upon the Lord and his way and working with eyes of flesh. How oft hath it thus fallen out? Honest *Naboth*, experienced this *1 King. 21.* So did *John Baptist*, when he was so basely and unworthily cut off, and that in his righteousness. So also the Martyres of the Lord, in all ages. Honest *Jeremiah* thought this a secret, that he could not be satisfied in, and a ground whereupon he would go plead with God
Chap. 12. 4. Yea

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4. Yea, when it is but as Eccles. 9: v. 2. 3. it seemeth crooked to many, who would have a visible difference in external things, alwayes put betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked. And yet we see the Wise Mans Observation was, that no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. *All things (saith he) come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: As the good, so the sinner; he that sweareth as he that feareth an Oath. This is an evil among all things, that are done under the Sun, that there is one event unto all.* Our carnal Reason would think, that God should so rule and governe the world, as that all might be in case to observe a palpable difference betwixt the Godly, and the Wicked, even in external things: But we will not get made straight, what God hath thus made crooked.

5. So it seemeth crooked to some, that it is oft times with men, as was observed by Salomon, Eccles. 9: v. 11. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battel to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skil, but time and chance happeneth them all:* But things fall out quite otherwise, than men would have

have expected, or hoped: And though herein appeareth a beautiful over ruling hand of Providence, controlling mens Projects, Designes and Forecastings, and disappointing them of their hopes, and of what they promised themselves, and made account to be sure of; because of their wise contrivance and managment of their work unto that end, yet our carnal Reason would think, it should be otherwayes, and that our paines labour and wise Contrivances should not be invaine; that *David*, when he had made such preparation for building of the House of God, should not misse of his great desire and wish. But our seeing of crooks in this straight All-ruling and All-disposing providence, doth but proclame our blindness.

6. Our carnal heart would oft times think, that it is a wonderful crook in the Providence of God, that he should suffer sin to be in the world, which doth so much dishonour him, and causeth so much trouble and evil, unto all, when he may and can well hinder it. We oft wonder, why the Lord should have suffered *Adam* to fall, and bring himself and all his posterity into such a sea of misery, yea and the whole creation almost; seeing he might have kept him, as he did the confirmed Angels; And we are

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are ready to think, that it had been better, if sin had not entered into the world ; and thus account this passage of the Lords Providence to be a crooked thing. And we are ready to wonder that the Lord suffers wicked persons to live so long to dishonoure Him, and commit more wickedness, and that He doth not presently cut them off, or at least re-
straine them, as He might do, a thousand wayes. As also that he should judicially harden their hearts ; as he did the heart of Pharaoh, that so they may commit more sin, and beleeve a lye, as 2 Thes 2: vers. 11, 12. and not obey the voice of the Lord, as Esai 6: v. 9, 10. Rom. 11. v. 8. Act. 28: 26. Mat. 13: v. 14. Mark. 4: v. 12. Luk. 8: 10. Job. 12: v 40. But if our eyes were opened, and if we were spiritual, we would see a beautiful straightness, where now we think there is a crook.

7. The Dispensations of the Lord, in and about His Church, do oft times seem crooked to us, when we consult with carnal Reason. As

(1.) It seemeth not straight to us, that His Dispensations should so contradict (1.) His Promises, (2.) The Hopes and Expectations of His People. And (3.) Their Prayers, Desires and Wrestlings. We oft think it should be otherwayes ; and so
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allaige that there is a crook and a palpable unevenness in the Way of the Lord.

(2.) It seemeth crooked to us, that His Church should be so kept under, and oppressed by wicked men; and persecuted for His sake, and for the truths sake, and should be still, as a bush all in fire: For we would think, that God should keep His own peculiar Kingdom, and his own Flock free from the Oppression & Tyranny of Oppressing Enemies: Hence we finde, that His People have put up many times a complaint concerning this. See *Psal. 44: vers. 12.* and *60: vers. 3.* and *94: v. 5* *Dan. 9: vers. 16.*

(3.) And that this trouble should not be for a short time, like a Summer shower, that soon bloweth over; but almost her constant lot from her youth *Psal. 129: vers. 1, 2.* so that her lucide intervals, and sun-blains are but short, and she is hardly well out of one tryal, while she is in the midst of another.

(4.) So it seemeth crooked, that this trouble should not be light, but very sad and sharpe; the Enemies should make long their furrowes *Psal. 129: v. 3.*

(5.) That she should not have one enemy to deal with, but many, both together and successively. The Tabernacles of Edom and
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the *Ismaelites*, of *Moab* and the *Hagarens*, *Gebäl* and *Ammon* and *Amaleck*, the *Philistines*, with the Inhabitants of *Tyre* and *Affure* *Psal* 83: 6, 7, 8.

(6.) That the Lord should not hear or regard the Prayers & Cryes of His people; but should rather be angry at their Prayer. *Psal.* 80: 4.

(7.) That the Lord should seem so inexorable, that he would not grant the suits of his special favourites, and such as have prevailed with Him at other occasions; interceeding in their behalfe, such as *Moses* and *Samuel* *Jer.* 15: 1. and *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job* *Ezech.* 14: 14, 20.

(8.) That the Lord should suffer these wicked enemies to overturne all His own work; break downe the carved work & pluck up the vine, which His own right hand hath planted. As *Psal.* 80: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. to burne up all the Synagogues of God in the Land; cast fire into the sanctuary &c. *Psal.* 74: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7. Yea and blaspheme His own name *vers.* 10. See *Psal.* 44.

8. There are also several things, in the Lord's Dispensations with His own people in particular, that seem to us many times crooked: As

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(1.) We

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(1.) We think that He should never hide his face from his owne faithful ones ; and that they should never be made to cry out with *Job Chap 13: 24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy ?* and as *David Psalm 10. vers 1. and 30. vers 7.*

(2.) Or if He contend against them, He should shew them wherefore, and not put them to complaine of this , as *Job* was, who said *Iob 10: 2. — Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.*

(3.) We think it strange and uncouth , that the Lord should shew himself terrible unto them, as to *Heman Psal. 88.* who was distracted with the terrour of God , and to *Iob. Chap. 7: vers 13, 14, 15. & 9: 34. & 6: 4.*

(4) We are ready to think , that such should never be under Cloudes , Fears , Darknes, sad Apprehensions, & Doubts concerning their state and condition, *Esaï. 50: 10.* But that alwayes they should enjoy light , and see their happy condition.

(5.) We think that the work of grace in His people should never meet with a stop , far less with any decay ; but that they should be still flourishing like the palme tree,

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tree , and growing like a Cedar in Lebanon.

(6.) So we think , that they should be free, all their dayes , of the trouble or at least of the prevailing power of corruption ; we think, that enemy should never assault us any more, or molest our quarters: We think it strange , that these servants should ever come to ride upon horses , in our souls ; and that His people should be made to cry out with *Paul Rom. 7: 24. Woe is me miserable man , who shall deliver me from the body of this death.*

(7.) We think it also strange , that they should have so little rest from Satan , and from his inward hellish Injections , tending to Atheisme. Infidelity, Blasphemy and all Profanity : Seemeth not that dispensation somewhat crooked , that *Paul* met with , after he was taken up to the third heaven 2 Cor. 12: 7 ?

(8.) It seemeth many times uncouth to us , that His people have so many sad and bitter houres ; & that they are so far from enjoying Comfort , Joy and Delight , & from that life of rejoyceing in the Lord continually , which is allowed to them , and they are called to ; that their life is nothing almost but a continual complaint;

sometimes compleaining of the Hardness of their heart, Blindness, Weakness, Impotency, Treachery, &c. sometimes of the weight of Duties; and of their Failings and Shortcomings; sometimes of the prevailling of Corruption and of the power of Temptation &c.

These and the like dispensations of the Lord, in and about his Saints, seem to themselves & to others sometimes crooked, and very unstraight: and as they wish it were otherwayes; so they suppose it would be more glorious and honourable to the Lord, if it were otherwise.

Thus it appeareth, how many things God hath made crooked, to our apprehensions: But now, who shall, who can make these crooked things straight? This is the **Second Particular**, in the words, That what God hath made crooked no man can make straight, with all his Wisdom, or Power, or by all the meanes he can use or devise; *for that which is crooked cannot be made straight Eccles. 1: 15. I know (said the wise man Eccles. 3: 14.) that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it. When He giveth quietness (said Elihu Job 34: 29.) who then can make trouble; & when*

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when He hideth his face, who then can behold him? Whether against a Nation, or a Man only?

And the reason is manifest, because

1. He is Unchangeable, and hath fixed all upon Eternal, and Immutable Purposes. *He is the Lord, he changeth not Mal. 3: v. 6. With him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning Iam. 1: 17.* He doth all things after the Counsel of His owne will *Ephes. 1. 11. taking Counsel of none Rom. 11: v. 34. Esai. 40: 13, 14.* His Counsel hath an immutability *Heb. 6: 17.*

2. He is Almighty; and who can juttle with Him, and put Him to take new Resolutions? *He is in one minde (said Iob Ch. 23: 13. and who can turn Him? And what His Soul desireth, that doth He. So Psal 115: v. 6. He hath done whatsoever he pleased. I know (said the Psalmist Psal. 135: 5, 6.) that Iehovah is great, and that our Iehovah is above all Gods, whatsoever the Lord pleaseth that did He, in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. So Iob tels us Chap 9. 4. He is wise in heart and mighty in strength, who hath hardened himself against him, & hath prospered? So vers. 12. Behold he taketh a way, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, what dost thou?*

3. He is Absolute and Sovereigne, to

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do what he will , as the Potter is absolute over the clay *Ier. 18: 6. Rom. 9: 10. Esai. 45: 9.* And he is uncontrollable : Who can call him to an account ? *Who can say unto him, what dost thou? Iob. 9: 12. He giveth not account of any of his matters Iob. 33: vers 13. For he is greater then man vers. 12.*

4. All his wayes are done in *Wisdom* , and all his works *Psal. 104: 24. & 136: 5.* And there is no *wisdome* against the Lord *Prov. 21: 30. He hath established the world by His wisdom Ier. 10: 12. & 51: v. 15. He is mighty in strength and wisdom Iob 36: 5.* And what then can foolish man , that is like a wilde asses colt , do ? *With the Ancient is wisdom* (said Iob Chap. 12: 12, 13, 14. &c. and in length of daies understanding : *With him is wisdom and strength: he hath Counsel & understanding: and thence inferreth, Behold he breakeeth down , and it cannot be built againe; he shuteth up a man , & there can be no opening &c. See further to the end of that Chap.*

5. All his works are perfect *Psal. 18: vers 30.* And then , what can be added to them, or taken from them to amende them? What is perfect cannot be made better, or amended , one way , or other. What we then think and account to be crooked , is Perfect , Straight and Even , and contri-
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buteth to make up this compleat perfection of the whole.

6. There are Depths and unseen Mysteries in the work and wayes of the Lord, that we cannot search, and ignorance of which causeth the sinstruous Apprehensions, that we have of them: And how shall we think to amende that, which we do not understand? *His works are great, sought out of all them, that have pleasure therein His works are honourable, glorious, & wonderful* Psal. 111: 2, 3, 4. Then I beheld (said the wise man, Eccles. 8: ver. 17.) *all the work of God, that a man cannot finde out the work that is done under the sun: Because though a man labour to seek it out; yea further, though a wise man seek to know it, yet shall he not be able to finde it. And againe Chap. 11: v. 5. As thou knowest not, what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow, in the womb of her, that is with childe; even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.*

The consideration of which should first cause us sorrow, and mourne before the Lord, for our seeking to amend God's work, as if we could make straight, what God hath made crooked, and set all things in a righter posture, than God hath done. Concerning which, we would 1. Take no-

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tice of some of these wayes, whereby we are attempting this vaine work. And 2. Take notice of the evil of this sin.

As to the *First*. We are seeking to make straight what God hath made crooked, when

1. We are in a quarrelling humore Disputing with God, and Condemning him in our minds, for what he is doing; and Justifying ourselves in our Anger and Displeasure against the Dispensations, and Wayes of the Lord, as did *Jonah*; who was displeased exceedingly & very angry, that the Lord spared *Ninive Chap. 3: v. 10.* with 4: v. 1. And when the Lord said unto him *Chap. 4: vers 4. Doeſt thou well to be angry?* was not for all that satisfied: and againe *vers 9.* when the gourd was withered, and the East winde blew, and the sun beat upon his head, he fell againe in this distemper; and when the Lord said unto him, the second time, *doeſt thou well to be angry?* he answered, *I do well to be angry, even unto death.*

2. When our vaine Ratiocinations are engaged against the wayes of the Lord, in one particular or other; and we have this or that, to object against that course, which the Lord taketh; as if we would
impute

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impute iniquity unto our Maker ; and accuse Him of unrighteous dealing: As those whom Paul bringeth-in reasoning against the truth of God , and saying Rom 9: 19.

——— *Why doth he yet finde fault ? For who hath resisted his will ?* To whom he answereth Vers. 20, 21. *Nay, but o man, who art thou, that (answerest againe, or disputest against God, or) repliest against God, &c.* As if he had said, Hath not the Lord Power and Sovereignty, in that matter, to do what he will ; as well as a Potter hath over a bit clay ? May not God dispose of His Clay, which he made Himself, as well as the Potter may do of the Clay, which he made not, and is not the Creator of ; but was created to his hand, by the same God, that created himself ? Why then dost thou quarrel with Him, or disputest against Him ? Canst thou help the matter ? Canst thou make that straighter, than it is ?

3. When we corrupt the truthes of God, and abuse them, perverting them to our corrupt and licentious Ends, like that saying Rom. 6: vers. 1. *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ?* And againe Vers. 15. *Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace ?* And Chap. 7:

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v. 7. *Is the Law sin?* So *Chap. 3: v. 31. Do we then make void the Law through faith?* These and the like Objections, which *Paul*, in his Epistles, preoccupieth, shew what the corrupt heart and reasonings of men are set upon; and how prone they are to turne the Grace of God into lasciviousness, and to pervert the right Wayes of the Lord. Whereby they clearly demonstrate, how displeased they are at the holy Truths and Wayes of God, and how ready to thraw and pervert them, that they may become more straight, then they seem to them at present to be.

4. When we Fret, Repine, Grumble and Grudge in our minde, against any of the Lords Dispensations in and about us, or our concernments. This was the great sin of *Israel*, they murmured against the Lord, and against *Moses*, *Exod. 15: and 16, and 17. Numb. 14, and 16, and 17. 1 Cor. 10: 10.* They were dissatisfied in their mindes, and repined and murmured against the Lord; and hereby they said, they would have the wayes and dispensations of the Lord altered towards them: they were crooked, and they would have them made more straight.

5. When our hearts do not sweetly comply

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comply with the Wayes and Dispensations of the Lord , or we learne not , nor study Christian Submission. We should *submit ourselves unto the Lord* , Iam. 4: vers. 7. and *humble ourselves under his mighty hand* 1 Pet. 5: v. 6. *We should be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits.* Heb. 12. vers. 9. even when he Crosseth , Chastneth and Afflicteth us But when we forget this Christian Duty , we declare our displeasure, at Gods wayes and dealings with us ; and say , that we would have his work amended , and that made straight , which He hath made crooked.

6. When we are Impatient , and cannot waite God's leasure , but take sinful courses to deliver ourselves ; or sit down discontented , and sinfully longe for an outgate ; then we declare our dissatisfaction with God's way , and would have his dispensations altered, and matters running in another channel : As when the labouring man would have the day of harvest the next week after the seed is cast into the ground , he is displeased with Gods Order and Appointment of some Moneths interveening : Whileas we should have Patience , and waite Gods time with Pa-

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tience, *Iam. 5: 7, 8. Luk. 8: 15. 2 Pet. 1: v. 6. Iam. 1; 4. Rom. 12: 12.*

7. When we are discontented with our own lot, and grudge at others, as having a better lot, than we have: an evil, which *James* condemneth *Iam. 5: vers. 9.* and which plainly sayeth, we would amend Gods work, and set straight what He hath made crooked. As that wicked King was displeased, when he heard the message of the Lord *1 Kings 20: 42, 43.*

8. When we are excessively Anxious and Disquieted in our minde, as to any passage of Providence, that we meet with, or as to any crosse that befallerh us. *David* checketh his own soul, as to this *Ps. 42: vers. 5, 11. and 43: 5.* saying *Why art thou disquieted within me?* We are discharged to be careful thus with a sinful anxiety for any thing *Phil. 4: v. 6. 1 Cor. 7: 32.* But When we are thoughtful, we clearly say, that we would faine make straight, what God hath made crooked, though Christ hath told us, *Matth. 6: 27.* that by taking thought, we cannot adde one cubite to our stature.

9. When, though we dar not speak against God, in sending a crosse upon us; yet we are not satisfied with the Manner,

or

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or Measure, or Season, or Duration and Continuance, or the Instrument of our crosse; but say, we would choose any other crosse but this: we would be satisfied, if it were not so Bitter, and so Heavy and so Insupportable: we would have taken it well, had it come upon us at any other time, than now: we would most chearfully have borne it, if it had been of shorter Continuance: and had any other person been the Instrument thereof, we would have laid our hand upon our mouth: all which and the like, though they seem to insinuate some sort of Submission; yet are plaine Declarations, that we think the way of the Lord crooked, and that we would have matters better ordered, and all things made more straight and even, than they are.

10. When in our prayers, there is not that submission unto the holy and soveraign Will of the Lord, that ought to be; but rather a limiteing of the holy One of *Israel*: and a sinful unwarrantable Importunity, as to things not necessary, in themselves, nor for us, without submission of soul unto the holy Will of the Lord, as to the Manner, Time and Measure of the Lords granting of our suites:

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when

When our Prayers are not commensurate unto the Promises, as to their Substance; nor put up with Submission to God's Will and Sovereignty, as to the Manner, Measure, Season, Way, and the like circumstances, which the great God hath kepted in His own hand.

By these and the like wayes, we declare our dissatisfaction with the wayes and works of God, and account them crooked, and think and endeavoure (though in vaine) to make straight, what God hath made crooked: An evil at which God is highly displeased. *Wo unto him* (saith the Prophet *Esai. 45: vers 9, 10.*) *that striveth with his maker: Let the Potshards strive with the Potshards of the Earth: shall the Clay say to him, that fashioneth it, what makest thou? Or thy work, he hath no hands? Wo unto him that saith to his Father, what begettest thou? Or to the woman, what hast thou brought forth? And the great sinfulness of this sin appeareth in these Particulars,*

1. It is a *striveing* against the Lord, in the place now cited: the word in the Original signifieth a *Contending in judgment*, as *Lam. 3: vers 58.* Leading a proceffe against one, Judging or Sentenceing in judgment: so also a *Chiding*, *Contending with-fighting.*

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fighting as *Gen. 26: vers 20, 22.* So that this sin is a calling of 'the most High to an account, and a bringing of Him before our judgment-seat, as *Iob 33: 13.* Where the the same verbe is used *Why dost thou strive against him?* (Or why dost thou call Him before thy tribunal, summond Him to compear before thee, or contend with Him in judgment, or plead against Him) He answereth not, *he giveth no account of his matters to any.*

2. It is a rebelling against the Lord. When the People of *Israel* murmured against the Lord, and against *Moses* and *Aaron* *Numb. 14: v. 1, 2, 3.* *Moses* said unto them *Vers. 9. Only rebel not ye against the Lord.* So it is said *Psal. 78: vers 40.* *How oft did they rebel against him, in the wilderness?* in the margine. See *Vers. 8.*

3. It is a manifest calling his *Wisdom* in question; and a saying, that He is not wise enough, to order and dispose matters aright. As if He were not mighty in wisdom *Iob 36: vers 5.* Our *Wisdom* were to cease from our own *Wisdom* *Prov. 23: vers 4.* and to beleeve, though we should not see, that in wisdom, he hath made the heavens and all *Psal. 104: vers. 34.* and *136: vers. 5.* and hath established the world
in

in wisdom *Jer.* 10: vers 12. and 51: v. 15. And not think to give Him Counsel and Advice, how He should rule the world, for there are Depths of Wisdom, and of Knowledge in Him *Rom.* 11. 33. that we should think upon with Admiration; for if in our wisdom, we think to correct His wayes, and quarrel against them, and not comply with them, he will *destroy the Wisdom of the wise*, *1 Cor.* 1: 19, 20. O what a guilt must this be to proclame ourselves wiser, than He is; and better able to order all things aright, at least, what concerneth ourselves! The very hawk will not flie by our wisdom *Job:* 39: 26. and shall we think to prescribe Rules to God?

4. It is a calling in question of His *Absolute Power* and *Sovereignty*: As if He might not do what he pleased; but were obnoxious to us, and bound to give an account of his wayes to us, or could do injustice, or wrong to any. As if he had not that Power over His Creatures, to whom he hath given being and all they have, that the Potter hath over the lump of Clay; or we have over our beasts, which are our fellow-creatures, and hold not their being of us. And must not this be a great sin?

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5. When we are sinfully anxious and disquieted with his Dispensations towards his Church; We call into question His Faithfulness and Care of, and also his Love to his Church; as if he had forgotten to be gracious, and would be merciful no more, and cared not that she perished; as Christs Disciples said *Mark. 4: 38.* contrary to *1 Pet. 5: 7.* And this, sure, must be no small sin.

6. We hereby proclame Him to be an imperfect Worker; and say, that He is not God; for his works, who is God, cannot but be perfect; and his Way also, *Deut. 32: 4. 2 Sam. 22: 31.*

7. We profess ourselves hereby able to finde out the depths of His wayes, and to search Him out unto Perfection, as was said to *Iob Chap. 11: v. 7.* Why else will we think to reprove Him, and amend what He hath done, as if it were amisse?

8. When we are dissatisfied with His Dispensations towards us, we really accuse the Most Holy of Injustice; as if indeed He had wronged us, and we had deserved better at His hands; though all His wayes are Judgment, and though He be a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, and just and right *Deut. 42: vers. 4.* *Eliphaz* said
to

to Iob, after he heard his complaints
*Chap. 3. Iob 4: vers 17. Shall mortal man be
 more just, than God? Shall a man be more
 pure than his Maker? Elibu said well Iob 34:
 vers 17. Shall we condemne him, that is most
 just? What a sin must it be, to lay such an
 Imputation on Him, who hath justice and
 judgment for the habitation of his throne Ps. 89:
 vers 14: and who is excellent in power and
 in judgment, and in plenty of iustice, Iob 37:
 vers 23.*

Next, The Consideration of this should
 cause us watch against this evil, and la-
 bour for another frame of heart, that will
 be more complying with the Wayes and
 Works of the Lord. And for this cause,
 we should take another look of the Works
 of the Lord, and consider them in another
 manner, than we usually do: and this
 bringeth me to the *Third* thing in the Text,
 which will also lead us to a further im-
 provment of this impossibility of helping
 what we suppose is amisse, in the Works
 and Dispensations of the Lord.

Thirdly, Therefore let us see, what way
 we should consider the Works of the Lord,
 to the end, we may have a suteable frame
 of spirit, complying sweetly with all the
 crooks that are, or we suppose to be, in
 Gods

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Gods Way and Works, for in reference to this only, shall we speak of *considering the Works of the Lord.*

We should then consider the Works of the Lord, whether of Creation, or of Providence.

1. So as that thereby we may become rooted and more settled in the Faith of this, that *He alone is Iehovah* above all Gods; and this would do much to quiet and calme our spirits: For our murmuring at, or displeasure with what *He* doth, floweth from the want of the clear sight and apprehension of the hand of the only Supreme and Sovereigne God therein; Hence, to the end, that people may set Him above all imagined, false and supposed Gods, he readeth a lecture to them of His great works *Esai. 40. from vers 12. and forward; and inferreth once and againe vers 18, 25. to whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare with him?* So he setteth forth several remarkable works, that *He* would do for his Church, that they may see, and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and that the holy One of Israel hath created this, *Esai. 41: vers 20.* And when we consider His Works so, as to see Him alone

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to be Jehovah, the Absolute and Sovereign King, Creator, Conservator and Disposer of all Things, according to His own will and pleasure, then our hearts will bow more, and submit unto His holy Determination, and we will learne to say, with good old Eli, 1 Sam. 3: 18. ——— *It is the Lord Jehovah, let him do what seemeth him good.*

2. We should consider the works of the Lord, till we finde thereby, that He alone is the wise Governour of the World, and that there is a beauty of Divine Wisdom to be seen and observed on all, even on that, which we account most crooked, in our blinde and byassed judgments. Thus did holy *Iob Chap. 12.* contemplate the most crooked-like works of the Lord, such as, His breaking down, shutting up of a man, sending out waters to overturne the earth, leading Counsellours away spoiled, making the judges fools, removing the speech of the trusty, taking away the understanding of the aged, pouring contempt upon Princes, weakening the strength of the mighty, destroying and straitning the nations; taking away the heart of the chiefe of the People of the earth, causing them to wander in a Wilderness,

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erness, wherein is no way, to grope in the dark without light, and making them to stagger as a drunken man: and he saw in the midst of all this *vers. 12, 13, 16.* that *with the ancient is wisdom*, even wisdom and strength; and that he had counsel and understanding. Such a sight, as this, of the great and wonderful works of God, would cause us put our mouth in the dust, and adore the Depths of the Counsel of God; and be far from quarrelling with Him, for any thing he doth: and when any thing appeareth crooked to us, to suspect our own folly and ignorance, as not seeing in to the profound Projects, wise and unsearchable Contrivances of the only wise God; rather than impute folly and ignorance to the only wise God. It were best that we saw, that we ourselves were beasts *Eccles. 3: 18.*

3. It were our wisdom to consider the works of the Lord, so as to finde out, see and observe his Loving Kindness. After a long rehearsal of the mighty and considerable works of God, both of Creation and Providence; and that both as to the whole world, and more especially as to the Church *Psal. 104, and 105, and 106, and 107.* in end the Psalmist *Psal. 107: 43.* saith,

faith, *Who so is wise and will observe those things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* There is a loving kindness ingraven upon all the works and wayes of the Lord, a sight of which would teach us to acquiesce more heartily in all He doth, and submit more sweetly unto the most fowr and rugged of His Dispensations: The faith and the sight of this would make all the works of the Lord appear most straight and lovely to us: and therefore, that our hearts may comply more heartsomely and christianly with the works and dispensations of God, and that we may be kepted from so much as desiring to have his wayes and dispensations other then they are, let us study and meditate upon the works that He doth, till we discover therein this mystery of loving kindness, that is wrapped up in all, and brought about by all, that this great God doth in the world, about and for His Church.

4. We should also consider and contemplate the works of the Lord for this end, and until we did remark, in some measure, the Purity, Unspotted Holiness, Righteousness and Integrity of this great Worker, *Hos. 14: 9. Who is wise, and he shall under-*
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derstand these things? Prudent and he shall know them? For the wayes of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressours shall fall therein. There is, in all the wayes of the Lord, whether we see it, or not, a divine and singular Righteousness; and it is the want of the sight of this, that makes us quarrel. *Jeremiah* knew that God was righteous, yet he did not see it so clearly, as was necessary, in the Dispensations of the Lord; and therefore he sayeth *Chap. 12: 1, 2.* as desirous to reason the case with God, *VVherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? VVherefore are all they happy, that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea they have taken root, they grow, yea they bring forth fruit &c.* So *Hab. 1: 2, 3.* O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear, cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save? *VVhy dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me, and there are that raise up strife and contention. And againe vers. 13. ----- VVherefore lookest thou upon them, that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man, that is more righteous than he? &c.* Therefore it would be our wisdom, so to consider the works of the

the Lord , as to be confirmed in the faith of this , that the Lord is Just and Righteous in all He doth ; and so as to finde new and fresh demonstrations thereof ; and then our hearts will be more calme under all , & more ready to submit to & acquiesce in all that the Lord doth.

5. We would study , dwell upon the thoughts of , and consider the works of the Lord , till we see and observe in them something of the Stateliness , Excellency and Majesty of God ; for in His works , which are honourable and glorious , wonderful and powerful *Psal. 111: 2, 3, 4, 6.* there are discoveries to be had of His excellent Majesty : yea a Spiritual eye can discern this , in the most common , obvious and ordinary of his works: *Elihu* saw this , in the bright light which is in the clouds , in windes cleansing of them , in faire weather coming out of the North , for after this, he addeth *Job. 37: 21.* — *With God is terrible Majesty.* God is indeed terrible in his doing to the Children of men. *Pf. 66: 5.* and this we will be convinced of , if we will come and see , and rightly consider His works. If we were thus studying the excellent works of the Lord , we durst not censure , or condemne Him , or His works.

works. But would rather fear; as it is Ps. 64:9. *And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God, for they shall wisely consider of his doing.* And this would be our wisdom: wherefore after much said of the commendation of the works of the Lord, the Psalmist closeth the Psal. III. with this vers. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* The fear of the Lord, taught and learned by the works of the Lord, would prove our wisdom. This is one special use that we should make of His stately doings. I know (said the wise man Eccles. 3: 14.) *that whatsoever God doth it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: And God doth it, that men should fear before Him.* See also Job. 37. vers 22, 23, 24. and vers. 14, 15, 16.

6. It were good to be so considering and meditating on the works of the Lord, until we came to have low and abasing thoughts of ourselves: thus did the Psalmist Ps. 8. contemplate the work of God ver. 1, 2, 3. And then addeth vers. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the Son of man, that thou visitest him?* And this would stop our mouth, when we were beginning to quarrel, at any thing He doth, and we would soon see cause of silence be-

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fore Him , because we would see , that we were but beasts.

7. We would so contemplate the works of the Lord , as to see and observe , how wisely, steadily, & irresistibly **He Ordereth & Carrieth on His works**, for throughing and bringing about His designed Ends. It is our ignorance of the ends and designs of God, that causeth us to complean and quarrel, and wish that His works were otherwise ordered and marshalled ; for saw we these , and considered how pertinent and futeable all the passages of His way , and all the circumstances of His work , were unto the end designed , we would be forced to say , Behold He doth all things well. When *Elibu* had been considering *Iob* 37. the Lords thunder and the great & small raine, the whirle wind & the frost, and observed how the Lord did wea-ry the thick cloud , and turne it about hither and thither ; he did not satisfie himself with that , till he also gote a look of the special ends, wherefore the Lord did so ; that so he might see the beauty , and splendour , that was therein : therefore he addeth *ver. 12, 13.* *And it is turned round about by his Counsels , that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them, upon the face of the world,*

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world, in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. And thereupon vers. 14. exhorteth Iob to hearken unto this, to stand still and consider the wondrous works of God: And of Him, who (vers. 16.) is perfect in knowledg. And such a sight as this of the works of the Lord would put us far from intertaining such thoughts of God, and of his wayes, as we too ordinarily have. If we saw Him, in these His works, acting as a wise Governour, carrying on His noble and excellent Designes and Purposes, we would see a necessity for all that He doth; and that no Circumstance might be wanting; otherwise His work should not be perfect, as it must be. And the faith of His being a God of wisdom, doing all for wise and holy ends, should quiet us, even though we should not see the Particular end, which the Lord Intendeth in this or that Particular work.

8. We would consider also the work of the Lord, and see how thereby He executeth many a time His judgments on the wicked, and how He is pouring out His red wine, that is full of mixture, and causing the wicked of the earth drink out the very dregs; as it is Psal. 75: 8. And

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thereby making it appear, that verily there is a God, that judgeth in the earth *Pf. 85.*

II. Yea, even when He seemeth most to be favouring the wicked, and His dispensations smile most upon them, He is but heaping wrath the more upon them, and sitting them for the day of slaughter.

Asaph, that could not see this, when he was under the Water, saw it clearly, when he went into the Sanctuary; then he understood their end, and saw that the Lord had set them in slippery places, and they were brought into desolation, as in a moment *Psal. 73: 17, 18, 19.* It was an heart-establishing sight, which the *Psalmist* had of the great works of the Lord *Psal. 92: 4, 5.* when he saw *vers. 6, 7.* that a brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this, when the wicked spring as the grasse, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.

CONSIDERATION XXII.
Judgement upon a Land, because
of sin, sometime will not be
held off by the prayer of
God's people.

JEREM. 15: 1.

*Then said the Lord unto me, though Moses
& Samuel stood before me; yet my
minde could not be toward this peo-
ple: Cast them out of my sight,
and let them go forth.*

IN a time, when, because of publick
Land abounding sins, the Lord bringeth on
Publick and General Calamities; especi-
ally such, as sweep away the Righteous
with the Wicked, and that could not be
prevented or held off by all the Prayers
and Supplications of His people, how
earnest so ever they have been therein; it
may seem no small piece of difficulty, how
a beleever shall win to any life; or to know
what a life may be had, in a such a dismal
day: It may therefore be of use to speak
S 3 a little

a little hereunto, especially seing this is very like to be the case of this Generation.

These words, and the like Passages, show us, that indeed there is a time, when God is so provoked by the finnes of a people, that after much abused patience and long-suffering, He will not be intreated to hold off the stroke, that He is about to send, or hath threatned because of Provocations: Nor shall the eminentest of His favourites, & wrestlers, who sometime have prevailed as Princes with Him, be in case to stand in His way, and avert the blow, by all their Intreaties & earnest Supplications. God was about to bring on this people of Judah, the long threatned desolation, and did denounce the same by His Servant *Jeremiah*, saying *Chap. 7: 14, 15*. That He would do unto His house at *Jerusalem*, which was called by His name, and wherein they did trust, as He had done unto *Shilo*; and that He would cast them out of His sight, as He had cast out their Brethren, the whole seed of *Ephraim*. And that *Jeremiah* might understand the peremptoriness of this denunciation, He addeth *vers. 16*. *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them; neither*

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neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee. The Lord hereby signifying not so much His will, that *Jeremiah* should surcease, and pray no more in their behalf; as the peremptoriness of His purpose and resolution, to bring on the judgment, so that all his Interceeding and Interposeing should not avail: And this is againe renewed Chap 11:14. *Therefore pray not thou for this people; neither lift up a cry, or prayer for them; for I will not hear them, in the time, that they cry unto me, for their trouble.* As if He had said, The decree is now gone forth, neither shall they prevail for themselves, nor thou for them. Yet Compassionat *Jeremiah* could not get them forgotten in his prayers; but interceedeth earnestly with the Lord, in their behalf *Jer. 14: 1.* From the beginning to the 10. ver. Whereupon the Lord said unto him the third time *vers. 11. pray not for this people for their good.* *Jeremie* againe *vers. 19.* to the end, notwithstanding of this, fell to the work of prayer, and did earnestly supplicat and interceed for them. But now the Lord tels him Chap. 15: 1. That *Moses* and *Samuel* should not prevail in their behalf; and therefore he may be the better satisfied, to hear that God would

not grant his Petitions, put up for them.

The like we have said foure times over *Ezek. 14: 14, 16. 18 20. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls: and againe, Though those three men were in it, as I live saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.* The matter then, which we are to notice is manifest, to wit, That there is a time, when the sins of a people come to that height, that God will not spare, upon any humane Intercession: He will hear no Intreaty. That was an unalterable and inevitable sentence against the house of honest Eli. *1 Sam. 3: 14. And therefore I have sworne unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Elies house shall not be purged with sacrifice, nor offering for ever.* When the Lord would beginne, He would also make an end, as it is said *v. 12. So Esai. 22: v. 14. And it was revealed in mine eares by the Lord of hostes; surely this iniquitie shall not be purged from you till ye die.* There is a time, when the end is come, and the Lord will judge a people, according to their wayes, and recompense upon them all their abominations; and His eye shall not spare, neither
will

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will He have pity : As Ezek. 7: 2. to 10.
And the Lord will not againe passe by
them any more *Amos 7: vers 8. and 8.
vers 2.*

Such a time and dispensation, as this,
cannot but be afflicting and grievous to
all, that are concerned in such matters :
And the Consideration of these particulars
may manifest how sad it is, when the Lord
is so provoked against a People, as no In-
tercessions of His most highly honoured
Favourites, upon whose Intreaties,
sometime He hath manifested wonderful
condescensions of grace, will prevail to
keep off the stroke; no not *Moses* and *Sam-
uel* both together.

1. That the Lord hath done much
at the Prayer and Intercession of these two
in particular, here mentioned, *Moses* and
Samuel : For *Moses*, see *Exod. 32.* where
the Lord was so wroth and displeased at
the Peoples turning aside so quickly out of
the way, and making the golden Calf,
that He said unto *Moses vers 9, 10.* *I have
seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked
People. Now therefore, let me alone, that
my wrath may wax hot against them, and that
I may consume them : And yet upon the In-
tercession of Moses, saying Vers 11, 12, 13.*

S 5 Lord,

Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hote against thy People, which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, with great power and with mighty hand &c. It is said Vers 14. That the Lord repented of the evil, which he thought to do unto his People. So againe Numb 14: v. 19, 20. See Psal. 99: vers 5. and 106: v. 23. In like manner, as to Samuel we see 1 Sam. 7. that when the Children of Israel were in great fear of the Philistines, they said to Samuel Vers 8. Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God, for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And upon this Samuel cried unto the Lord, for Israel, and the Lord heard him. See also Psalm 99: v. 6. Is it not sad, that the Lord, who sometime did so much upon the Intreaty of these Persons, is now so offended, that He would not regard their Intercessions, nor spare upon their request?

2. That the Lord hath frequently spared, and kepted a stroke off His People upon the interposing of others, as of Amos Chap. 7: v. 2, 3, 5, 6. When he had prayed for the People, and had said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? The Lord repented and said, It should not be. And againe the
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second time he prayed, and had the same return. So *Nehemiah* 9. and *Daniel* Ch. 9. and *Asa* 2 *Chron.* 14: v. 11. and *Jehosaphat* 2 *Chron.* 20. and others.

3. That the Lord hath sometimes forborne to strick, when even graceless Persons, and such, as had no interest in the special favour of God, have prayed and humbled themselves: as when He spared *Ninivee*, after that natural People had humbled themselves: And when that wicked man *Ahab*, that did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him 1 *Kings* 16: vers. 30, 33. rent his cloths, and put sack-cloth upon his flesh, and fasted and lay in sack-cloth, and went softly, the Lord delayed the stroke, and would not bring the evil upon his house, in his dayes 1 *Kings* 21: v. 27, 29. How sad must it then be, that He, who sometime hath turned from the fierceness of His anger, and held off the evil threatned upon the crying of graceless Persons, will not hear the earnest Intreaties of His greatest Favourites?

4. This dispensation will also appear more sad and afflicting, if we consider what an high esteem the Lord hath for the Prayers and Intercessions of His worthies. Such

an account hath He of them, that the expressions thereof are indeed rare and very remarkable. *Let me alone*, saith He unto *Moses* *Exod.* 32: v. 11. as if *Moses* had been stronger than He, and had bound up His hands; or as if God could do nothing without *Moses's* consent or permission. So said He to *Iacob* *Gen.* 32: v. 26. when He was wrestling with Him by prayer and supplication *Hos.* 12: v. 4. *Let me go*: as if He could not have gone without *Iacob's* good leave and permission: And *Iacob* is said to have prevailed with God, as a Prince; and hath therefore his name changed into *Israel*.

5. Adde to this end, the frequent promises made of the Lords hearing of such, in the behalf of others *Gen.* 20: 7. the Lord said to *Abimelech*, *Restore the man his wife, for he is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.* So *Iob.* 42: v. 8. The Lord directed *Iob's* Friends to set him a work to pray for them, with a promise of success. *Go to my servant Iob, and offer up for yourselves a Burnt-offering; and my servant Iob shall pray for you; for him will I accept.* How sad then must it be, when the Lord will not hear such. See also *Iam.* 5: v. 14, 15, 16.

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6. Yea sometimes we read, that the Lord hath delivered, when there was no Intercessour *Eesai. 59: vers 16, 17. And He saw, that there was no Intercessour. Therefore his arme brought salvation unto Him, and His righteousness it sustained Him.* Must not His anger then be great, when He will not pity, nor spare, even though His worthies, whom He highly honoureth, were standing before Him, and putting up Supplications, in the behalfe of a sinful People?

7. He hath said *Psal. 50: vers 15. — Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* Is it not then sad, when iniquity is come to such an height, that the Lord will not onely not hear the People themselves, when they cry; but also He will not hear the beseechings and intreaties of such, as have most prevailed with Him, at other times?

8. As also if we consider, how unanswerable this appeareth to be unto the Title and Stile, which He hath gote, and the Consideration of which hath encouraged His servants to call upon Him: As *Psal. 65: vers 2. O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all Flesh come*, such a Dispensation, as this, cannot but be sad and grievous.

If it be enquired, when we may apprehend the time to be such, as wherein the Lord will hear no Intercessions, no Prayers, nor Intreaties of His greatest Favourites, in the behalf of a sinful People, against whom the Lord is coming in judgment? I *answere*, Though we may not be peremptour herein, knowing that the Lord sometimes taketh pleasure to Act, according to a Sovereignty of mercy; or the glory of His rich Grace and Compassion; and therefore must leave a latitude unto the Sovereignty of free Grace: Yet if we consider the condition of this People, of whom this is said; and see what iniquities they were guilty of, at this time, we apprehend such a thing may be feared, where the Lord is in the same, or in the like manner, provoked; and when He is coming in judgment against a people chargable with the same evils, it may be feared, that no prayer, no intercession of one or other, shall availe to hold off the judgment. Of these sins, whereof this People, for whom the Lord would hear no intercession, we shall mention some few, to the end we may be helped to understand better the language of Gods present Dispensations; and to search and see,
whether

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whether there be cause or no, to fear, that judgment inevitable is to be the lot of this generation.

1. When sins, and rebellion against the Lord, come to an exceeding great height, and gross and palpable defection is begun and carried on by Court and Countrey; then the Lord is engaged to vindicate His Name and Justice, before the World; that all may see, He is no Patronizer of Wickedness, even in a People called by His Name. Thus it was in the dayes of *Manasseh*, who, with his Court, committed such hainous wickedness, as was never there before perpetrated, as may be seen *2 Kings 21: v. 1, to 10. 2 Chron. 33: 1, to 11.* and wherein the whole land was involved: Wherefore the Lord threatned *2 Kings 21: v. 12, 13, 14, &c.* to stretch over *Jerusalem* the line of *Samaria*, and the plummet of the House of *Ahab*; that is, that He would do with *Jerusalem*, as He hath done with *Samaria*, and the House of *Ahab*; and no more spare those, than He did these. And (which is very remarkable) this iniquity the Lord would not Pardon, notwithstanding that *Manasseh* himself got mercy, & reformed several things before his death; and notwithstanding of a more universal
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and general Reformation, that was in the dayes of his Grand-child *Josiah*, that none-such King: For it is said *2 Kings 23: v. 25, 26, 27. And like unto him* (i. e. *Josiah*) *was there no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the Law of Moses; neither after him, arose there any like him. Notwithstanding* (as it is added) *the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the Provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him with all. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, &c.* And in this same place *Jer. 15.* after the Lord had said *Vers 1.* that though *Moses and Samuel* stood before Him, his mind could not be towards them; but that He would cast them out of His sight, to the death, to the sword, to the Famine, and to the Captivity, *Vers 2.* to the Sword, to Dogs, to Fowls, and to Beasts *Vers 3.* He saith *Vers 4.* *And I will cause them to be removed into all Kingdomes of the Earth, because of Manasseh, the Son of Hezekiah King of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.*

2. When hainous iniquities, and sins become common and epidemick, in a land, infecting all ranks of Persons, young and old,

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old, rich and poor, Magistrat, Minister and common People; then an inevitable blow is to be feared: for so was it with this people, as we see *Jer. 5: vers. 1. &c.* hardly could there a man be found in *Jerusalem* to execute judgment, and to seek the truth: Neither was this scarcety to be found only among the poor and foolish people; but even among the great men; for they had altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds *Vers 5.* therefore followeth *Vers 7.* *How shall I pardon thee for this? And againe Vers 9. Shall I not visite for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?* So in the two last Verses of that *Chapt.* it is said, *A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the Land. The Prophets prophesie falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their meanes, and my People love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof.* Such Priest, such People were here; and what else but ruine could be expected? So *Jerem. 6: vers 13.* and *8: v. 10.* it is said, that from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the Prophet even unto the Priest, every one dealeth falsly: Therefore is wrath threatened both upon old and young, and upon all the inhabitants of the land *Vers 11, 12.*
See

See also *Vers 28*. They were all grievous revoltors, brasse and iron, they were all corrupters. So is this plainly charged upon them *Chap. 7: v. 18*. *The Children gather wood, and the Fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven.* So that Man, Wife and Children, young and old, were conspiring in one, and with one shoulder carrying on this Defection and Apostasie from God. So *Jerem. 11: v. 13, 14*. *For according to the number of thy cities, were thy Gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the Streets of Jerusalem, have they set up Altars to that shameful thing, Altars to burn incense unto Baal.* Thus was this sin become universal through the whole City *Jerusalem*, and through the whole Land of *Judah*: And what followeth hereupon? *Therefore pray not thou for this People &c.* The like we finde *Micah. 3: vers, 11*. *The Heads did judge for reward, and the Priests did teach for hire, and the Prophets did divine for Money: And what followeth upon this? Therefore (Vers 12) shall Zion for your sakes be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountaine of the house as the high places of the forest; that is, Citie and Sanctuary shall be laid desolate.* This
same

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same was laid to the charge of this People by *Zephaniah*, *Ch. 3: ver. 3, 4.* Her Princes within her are roaring lions, her judges evening Wolves, her Prophets light and treacherous Persons, her Priests have polluted the Sanctuary: So that both Church and State was corrupted: & therefore was woe denounced against her *Vers 1.* See also *Micah 7: 2, to 6.*

3. When Corruption in the Worship, and Ordinances of God, is admitted, fostered and continued in; and Superstition or Idolatrie is brought-in, then an inevitable stroke is to be feared: for God is a jealous God, and will not hold them guiltless that take His Name in vaine, but will visite the iniquities of the Fathers unto the third and fourth Generation of those that thus hate Him, and corrupt His Ordinances: This was also given as a cause of the destruction, that came on this People *2 Chron. 36: v. 14.* They polluted the House of the Lord, which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. So *Ezek. 5: vers 11.* it was threatned. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, surely, because thou hast defiled my Sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations; therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither

neither will I have pity, See also the following Verses, where the dreadfulnes of the blow is laid forth: yea saith he Vers 13. thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted. And all is sealed in end Vers 17. with this, I the Lord have spoken it. So Ezek. 7: vers 20. As for the beauty of his Ornament, he set it in Majesty: But they made the Images of their Abominations, and of their detestable things therein. This was their sin, and what followeth? Therefore have I set it far from them, or made it unto them an unclean thing. And further in the following Verses, He threatneth, to give it into the hands of strangers for a prey, and to robbers, who shall defile it, &c. See likewise Chapt. 8. throughout, and Chap. 23: vers 38, 39. So Jerem. 9: vers 12, 13, &c. The Land was perishing, and was burnt up like a Wilderness, that none passeth thorow: And wherefore was this? Because (saith the Lord) they have forsaken my law, which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their Fathers taught them &c.

4. When

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4. When a land or Church maketh defection from God, apostatizeth, breaketh wedlock, renounceth their Covenant relation; then a sword is to be expected, wherewith the Lord shall avenge the quarrel of His Covenant *Levit 26: 25.* & there is ground to fear, that judgment shall inevitably overtake such sinners: For thus was it with this people of Judah *Ier. 2: 9, 10. 11, 12, 13.* So *Ier. 4: 16, 17, 18.* They had forsaken God, and rebelled against Him; and therefore came destruction upon destruction *v. 28.* and *Ier. 11: 10.* Because they brake God's Covenant, which He had made with their Fathers: Therefore *v. 11.* He threatned to bring evil upon them, which they should not be able to escape, and that He would not Harken, though they should cry unto Him: And then followeth *vers 14.* *Therefore pray not thou for this people &c.* So *Ier. 22: 6, 7.* The Lord threatned to make them a wilderness, and Cities not inhabited, in so much, that Nations shall be astonished, and enquire what can be the cause of this? And the answer they shall receive is this *v. 9.* *Because they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord, their God, and worshipped other Gods & served them.* And in this same place
Ir. 15

Ier. 15: 6. it is said, *Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward; therefore will I stretch out mine hand against thee, & destroy thee, I am weary with repenting.* See what was threatned for breach of Covenant Ier. 34: v. 17, 18, 19, 20. The Lord said, He would proclame a liberty to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine, and would make them to be removed into all the Kingdomes of the earth, and give all ranks among them into the hands of their Enemies; and give their dead bodies to be meat unto the fowls of heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. We see Ezek. 16. how the Lord deduceth a long process against them, and proveth them to have plaid the harlot, and that in a most impudent manner: And how therefore he saith, that He will judge her as a woman, that breaketh wedlock v. 38. & make his fury towards them to rest, and his jealousie shall depart, and He will be quiet vers. 42. and againe v. 59. He saith *I will even deal with thee, as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath, in breaking the Covenant.* See the like charged upon Israel, as the ground of their desolation. Hos. 4: 12, 13, 14. & 5: 4, 5, 6, 7. & 8: 1, 2, & 9: 1, 2, 3. & 13, 16.

5. When

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5. When this Defection and Apostasie from God in the matter of Religion, is accompanied with gross immoralities, fearful sins against the Second table of the Law, which the very light of Nature condemneth; then may the guilty fear an unavoidable stroke, & a blow of justice, that shall not be evited; for the Lord will not have it said, or supposed by strangers, that He will bear with gross impieties in His own professed people, and suffer them to exceed the heathen in wickedness, without control, or punishment: We see this people of Judah, upon whom inevitable ruine was coming, were charged likewise with many gross and hainous impieties *Ier.* 5: 26, 27, 28, 29. There vvere among them wicked men, they did lay waite, as such as laid snares, they set a trap, they watched men, their houses were full of deceit; yea they did overpasse the deeds of the wicked; & thereupon it followeth *v.* 29 *Shall I not visite for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged of such a Nation, as this?* So *Ier.* 9: 1. They were all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men, they bend their tongues for lies like bowes, they did proceed from evil to evil, they taught their tongues to speak lies,

lies, and deceived their Neighbours; they spoke peacably, but in heart they did lay wait: Therefore it is added v. 9. *Shall I not visite them for these things? &c.* So Jer. 21: 12. *O house of David, thus saith the Lord, execute judgement in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressour, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.* These things were neglected by them; and therefore wrath came upon them, at length, and there was no remedie Jer. 22: 3, 4, 5, 6. And the Prophet Ezekiel hath the same charge against this people Chap. 5: 5, 6. They changed Gods judgments into wickedness, more than the Nations, and his statutes more than the Countreys: And therefore the Lord threatned v. 8, 9, 10. to execute judgment in the midst of them, and to do that unto them, which He had not done before, and the like whereof He would not do any more: He would bring on them an unexemplified stroke, and a stroke, that should not have a parallel. And againe Chap. 9: 9, 10. *The iniquity of the house of Israel and of Judah is exceeding great, and the Land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness.* And therefore it is added, *mine eye shall not spare,*
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neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. Therefore was it, that commission was given to the Lord's executioners to go thorow and slay Old and young, maids and little children and women; yea all, except the marked ones v. 5, 6. See also *Chap.* 16: 46, 47, 48. *Judah* corrupted her self more than *Samarca*. yea more than *Sodom* v. 49: 50, 41. And *Chap* 22: we have a large Catalogue of their sins, see v. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. And that as the provoking cause, drawing forth the sword, wherewith the Lord would cut off both the righteous and the wicked, mentioned *Chap.* 21: ver. 3. — 14. And bringing-on the desolation and scattering, mentioned *Chap.* 22: 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22. Thus the Lord dealt also with *Israel*, because of their manifold iniquities, mentioned *Hof.* 4: 1, 2, 3. there was no truth, nor mercy, in the land, nor knowledge of God; but there was swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery and blood touching blood. See also *Miscab.* 6: 10, 11, 12, 13.

6. When this defection, and course of sinning is long continued-in, and there is no wearying of this way, but rather a growing in this Apostasie; then such may

T fear,

fear, that at length the Lord will come, and will not spare, nor pity, nor passe by any more; for thus was it with this people of Iudah Ier. 16. there are sad judgments denounced against them, from the beginning to V. 10. And thereof the reason is given vers. 11, 12. - *Because your fathers have forsaken me, and have walked after other gods &c. And ye have done worse than your fathers; for behold ye walk every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me.* And therefore destruction is threatned of new v. 13. *Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land, that ye know not ——— where I will not shew you favour.* So Ier. 32: 30, 31. *For the Children of Israel, & the Children of Iudah have only done evil before me from their youth. And againe. This city hath been to me, as a Provocation of mine anger, and of my fury, from the day that they built it, even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face.* So the Prophet Ezekiel draweth up a long Libel of many Instances of their rebellion, continued in for many Generations, running in a constant line from Father to Son, from V. 3. to V. 33. and there we finde the sentence given out, *As I live saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand,*

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hand, and with a stretched-out arme, and with fury poured-out, will I rule over you And Israel was charged with this same guilt, *Hof. 10: ver. 9. O Israel, thou hast sinned from the dayes of Gibeah.* See also *Esa. 65: 7.*

7. When People become bold and impudent in their sinful courses, then there is ground to fear a sad and inevitable stroke of Justice: For thus was it with this People of *Judah Jer. 3: 3.* ——— *Thou hadst a whores fore-head, thou refusedst to be ashamed.* And againe *Jer. 6: 15. Were they ashamed, when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush:* And what is added upon this? *Therefore they shall fall among them, that fall; at the time, that I visite them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.* So *Chap. 8: v. 12.* in these last mentioned places, the false Prophets would seem specially to be meant; yet the circumstances will include others. When People provoke the Lord to anger continually, to his face, as it is *Esa. 65: 3.* then they become a smock in Gods nose, and a fire that burneth all the day, and they must expect a recompence from God, as *Vers. 5, 6.*

8. When People stand chargable with the abuse of many favours, received at the hands of God; which they have perverted, and mis-improven to the hardening of themselves in their wicked courses; then it is to be feared, that God will come at length, and be avenged on such a Generation of Perverters: This iniquity was also charged upon this People of *Judah* by *Jeremiah Chap. 2: 5, to 9.* Their forgetting the old kindneses of God, and abusing His favours, defiling His land, and making His heritage an abomination, is charged home *Vers 7.* *Wherefore* (saith the Lord *Vers 9.*) *I will yet plead with you, and with your Childrens Children will I plead.* So *Chap. 11.* after the Lord had said to *Jeremie*, *Pray not for this People Vers 14.* he addeth, as a provoking cause hereunto *Vers 15, 16, 17.* *What hath my beloved to do, in mine house, she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee, when thou dost evil, then thou rejoicest. The Lord called thy name a green Olive tree, faire and of goodly fruit. But there was no sutable walking; and therefore it followeth, with the noise of a great tumult, he hath kindled fire upon it, and the tranches of it are broken. For the Lord of Hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced*

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nounced evil against thee, &c. So Jer. 13. the Lord by a similitude of a girdle, sheweth how he had caused the whole House of *Israel* to cleave unto Him, and the whole House of *Judah*; that they might be unto Him, for a People, and for a Name, and for a Praise, and for a Glory: but they would not hear; and therefore he threatened to make them like unto the marred girdle; and so mar the pride of *Judah*, and the great pride of *Jerusalem*, and make them good for nothing. See *Vers* 9, 10, 11. So *Chap.* 16: 18. he saith, *And first, I will recompense their iniquity, and their sin double, because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance, with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things.* Thus did they requite the kindness of God, in bestowing that land upon them, by defiling it with their sins; and therefore He threatneth to recompense their iniquity double. So doth the Prophet *Ezekiel Chap.* 16. make a large deduction of the favours and kindnesses shown to that people, and give us also a large summe of their abusings and pervertings of these favours: And therefore is wrath denounced from *Vers* 36. and forward. This was likewise charged upon *Ephraim* or *Israel*, by

Hosea Chap. 7: 13, 15. — they have transgressed against me, though I have redeemed them; yet they have spoken lies against me — though I have bound and strengthened their armes; yet they do imagine mischief against me. So Hos. 11: vers 1, 2, 3, 4. Esai. 1: vers 2.

9. When People become hardened in their sins, loving and delighting to wander out of the way, and glory in their wickedness, as resolving never to amend, and are therefore rushing at all threatenings, and contemning them; then is there great ground to fear an overturning blow, that no meanes shall avert: It was also laid to the charge of this people Ier. 14: 10. *that they loved to wander, and did not refraine their feet: And what followeth upon this? Therefore the Lord doth not accept them; He will now remember their iniquity, and visite their sins.* And then Vers 11. *The Lord said unto him, pray not for this People for their good.* Vers 12. *When they fast, I will not hear their cry — but I will consume them by the Sword, by the Famine, and by the Pestilence.* So the Prophet Ezekiel Ch. 24. *seeth Ierusalem, in the likeness of a pot full of pieces; and she is called* Vers 6. *the pot, whose scum is therein, and is not gone*

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gone out of it; she would cast away none of her abominations: and therefore the Lord said *Vers 9. Wo to the bloody City, I will even make the pile for fire great. Vers 10. Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burnt. Vers 11. Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the braſſe of it may be hot, and may burn: and that the filthineſſ of it may be molten in it, and that the ſcumme of it may be consumed.* She would not put away her ſcum in time, and therefore the Lord will put an end to it in her deſtruction; and He will not be hindered; for it is added *Vers 13, 14. In thy filthineſſ is leudneſſ, becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged; thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſſ any more, till I have cauſed my ſwre to reſt upon thee, I the Lord have ſpoken it, it ſhall come to paſſe, and I will do it, I will not go back, neither will I ſpare, neither will I repent &c.* The ſame was the ſin of Iſrael, for ſaith *Hoſea Ch. 7:10. And the pride of Iſrael teſtifieth to his face; and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor ſeek Him for all this. So Ch. 11:7. And my People are bent to back ſliding from me: though they called them to the moſt High, none at all would exalt Him. They hardened their necks, that they*

might not hear God's Words : Therefore the Lord said *Jer. 19: 15.* that He would bring upon *Jerusalem.* , and upon the rest of the Towns , all the evil that He had pronounced against it. It was this same People , of which *Zephaniah* spaketh *Chap. 1: 12.* *That were settled on their lees, and said in their heart , the Lord will not do good , neither will He do evil.* Upon which, dreadful and desolating strokes are denounced, to the end of that Chapter.

10. When a People under their sins , turne brutish , sensual and senseless , regarding nothing that the Lord is either doing or saying , by His Servants or Dispensations; but following their pleasures; then an alarming and destroying stroke , that shall not be turned away , may be feared , according to that *Esaï. 22: v. 12, 13, 14.* *And in that day , did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping , and to mourning , and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, and behold joy and gladness , slaying Oxen and killing Sheep , eating Flesh , and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink , for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine eares by the Lord of Hosts; surely , this iniquity shall not be purged from you , till ye die , saith the Lord God of Hosts.* The like we have pro-

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pronounced by *Amos Chap. 6: v. 1*, &c against such, as are at ease in Zion, put far away the evil day, lye upon beds of yvory, & stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the Stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, invent to themselves Instruments of musick, like David; that drink wine in bowls, & anoynt themselves with the chiefe oyntments; but they are not grieved for the Affliction of *Ioseph*. Now see what the Lord threatneth upon this account *Ver. 7.* and forward, confirming the same with an Oath *Vers 8.* to shew the immutability of this Counsel.

II. When People are so far from taking conviction, and making challenges welcome, and from humbling themselves before the Lord, in the sense of their iniquities; that they will justifie their owne wayes, and plead themselves innocent before God; Then, there being no more hop of their recovery, their case seemeth desperat, and they may expect a final blow: For this was also the sin of this People of *Iudah*; as we see *Ier. 2: v. 23* *How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim?* Therefore *Vers 24.* their moneth must come, wherein they

T. 5 shall

shall be found and taken : So *Vers 35*. Yet thou sayest, because I am innocent, surely, his anger shall turn from me. What followeth? Behold I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. So that the Lord is engaged so much the more, to plead His controversie against them; and make them and the world both see, by sad effects, how guilty they have been. Also we see how the Lord justifieth His procedour with this same People by *Ezekiel Chap. 18*. throughout: they would say, that all these calamities, which they did meet with, and were yet to meet with, came not on them for their own sins, but for their Fathers sins; their Fathers (said they) had eaten sowre grapes, and their teeth was set on edge; and therefore they concluded, that the way of the Lord was not equal: but the Lord, in that *Chapter*, is vindicating Himself, and evinceing that they were as guilty, as their Fathers, & did tread in their Fathers footsteps, approving all that their Fathers did; and therefore could not plead innocent. See likewise *Ezek. 33: 11, to 20*.

12. When People will go on in their wickedness, and shelter themselves under an outward Profession of Religion and Piety; then it is to be feared, that God shall

shall vindicat His Name and His Glory ,
in the sight of the Nations , and make it
appear that His outward worship and ser-
vice shall be a scug to no profane Person :
For this was also the sin of this People
Jer. 7: 3, 4. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the
God of Israel , amend your wayes and your
doings , and I will cause you to dwell in this
place : Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the
Temple of the Lord , the Temple of the Lord,
the Temple of the Lord are these. Because
they had the Temple among them , they
thought all should be well , and they
should never be ruined, do what they pleas-
ed: But the Lord , in the following *Ver-*
ses , manifesteth that all that should no
more save them, than it saved *Shiloh*; and
then addeth *Vers 15, 16. And I will cast you*
out of my sight , as I have cast out all your Bre-
thren , the whole Seed of Ephraim. Therefore
pray not thou for this People &c. So saith
the Lord by *Esaias Ch. 1: 11, &c.* To what
purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices &c.
The Lord cared for none of these things ,
when their outward walk was not answer-
able to their profession; He would not
hear their Prayers *Vers 15.* So *Esai. 66:*
3, 4. He thereupon threatened to choose
their delusions , as they had chosen their

own wayes, and that in which He delighted not. See also *Amos 5: 21 to 23*. Micah laith his to the charge of this same People. *Chap. 3: 11*. *The heads thereof judge for reward, and the Priests thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money: Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, is not the Lord among us, none evil can come upon us,* But what followeth upon this? *Vers 12*, *Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountaine of the House, as the high places of the forest.*

13. When iniquity aboundeth particularly amongst Church-men, who should both by their doctrine & example have reclaimed the people from their sinful courses; then the matter seemeth desperat, and God must be avenged on all together; Hence we see this same people charged with this *Jer. 2: 8, 9*. *The Priests said not, where is the Lord? And they that handle the Law, knew me not: The Pastors also transgressed against me, and the Prophets Prophefied by Baal, & walked after things, that do not profite. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your Childrens Children will I plead.* See also *Ch. 6: 14, 15.* and *8: 11, 12, 13*. There was falshood among the Priests and the Pro,

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Prophets, and they healed the hurt of the daughter of Gods People slightly, saying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace: And therefore followeth *Vers 13.* *I will surely consume them &c.* So *Ezek. 22: 25, 26.* *There is a conspiracy of her Prophets, in the midst thereof---they have devoured souls, her Priests have violated my Law, and have profaned my Holy things &c.* Therefore (as it followeth *Vers 31.*) *have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.* See also *Hos. 4: v. 6, 7, 8, 9.* and *9: vers 8.*

14. When a People lay not God's controversy to heart, when He is pleading the same against them by lesser judgments; nor are taking warning thereby, but notwithstanding thereof are going on in their sins; then it is to be feared, that God shall once for all send a consuming stroke, that they shall not evite: for this was also the sin of this People, as we see *Jer. 5: 3.* — *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: So Chap 2: 30. and 12: v. 11.* Thus was it also with Israel *Amos 4: v. 6.* and forward to the end: several par-

ticular judgments are there mentioned ; but they wrought them not up unto a returning to the Lord *vers* 6, 8, 10, 12. And then a nameless Judgment, or a Judgment without a parallel , a judgment that could not be expressed is threatned ; and they are bidden prepare for it *vers* 12. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee , O Israel ; & because I will do thus unto thee , prepare to meet thy God , O Israel.* See *Amos* 7. where also several Judgments are mentioned , but the Lord made not yet a full end: But at length *vers* 8. He saith , *I will not againe passe by them , any more:* And so againe *Chap.* 8:2. See likewise *Zeph.* 3: 7. *Eesai.* 1: v: 5, 6, 7, 8.

15. When oppression & injustice rageth among a people , then is there just ground to fear such an overflowing blow; Violence was one of the sins , that brought on the flood on the old world *Gen.* 6: 11, 14. And for this sin , was *Jerusalem* threatned with destruction *Eesai.* 1: 21, 23, 24. *How is the faithful city become an harlot ? — they judge not the fatherless , neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.* *Therefore thus saith the Lord , the Lord of hosts , ah , I will ease me of mine adversaries , and avenge me of mine enemies.* So *Jer.* 7: 6. they were oppressing the
the

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the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shedding innocent blood: As also Jer. 22: 17 18. And therefore are sore judgments threatned against their King *Johojakim vers 18, 19.* that he should be buried with the burial of an asse, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Ierusalem. We see what was threatned against Israel *Amos 2: 6, 7, 8.* For this sin, of selling the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes, for panting after the dust of the earth, on the head of the poor, turning aside the way of the meek, and laying themselves down upon cloths, laid in pledge, & drinking the wine of the condemned, in the house of their God. See also *Amos 8: 4, 5, 6.* where this sin of unrighteousnesse and oppression is charged upon them; and then followeth *vers 7.* *The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely, I will never forget any of their works. 8. shall not the land tremble for this, & every one mourne that dwelleth therein? &c.* So *Mic. 2: 1, 2.* the like sin is charged upon that people: and then it followeth *V. 3.* *Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks.* And utter desolation is threatned *v. 4, 5.* And *v. 10.* It is said *Arise ye,*

ye, & depairt; for this is not your rest &c. See likewise Ch. 3: 1, 2, 3, 4. and againe v. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Habbakuk* also saw this sin in Judah Chap. 1: 2, 3, 4. Violence, Iniquity, Grievance, Spoiling, Strife and Contention, no Judgment, but wrong Judgment: Therefore v. 5, 6. &c. an incredible work of Judgment was to be wrought, and the *Caldeans* were to be sent against them. So was the like threatened by *Zephaniah* Ch. 1: 3, 7, 9. for the same sin and 3: v. 3. See *Ez.* 5: 23. to the end.

16. When people will not follow Gods way, and turne at His reproof, but go on in their sin; and when evil cometh upon them, use carnal shifts to save themselves, and run to the arme of flesh; then it is to be feared, that God's anger shall break out and burn without remedie: For this was also the sin of *Iudah*, they would not turn to God, but trust in *Egypt* and *Assyria*, in their strait *Ier.* 2: 8, 9, 36, 37. So *Ez.* 8: 6, 7, 8. For as much as this people refuseth the waters of *Shiloah* that go softly, and reioice in *Rezin* and in *Remaliah's* Son: Now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river strong and many, even the King of *Assyria*, ——— and he shall

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shall passe thorow Iudah, and shall overflow and go over &c. So Hof. 5: 13, v. 14. When Ephraim saw his sickness; & Iudah his wound; then went Ephraim to the Assyrian — I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as an young Lion to the house of Iudah: I, I will tear and go away, I will take away, and none shall rescue. And againe Chap. 7: 11, 12. Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down, as the fowls of the heaven: I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard. And againe Ch. 8: 8, 9, 10. Israel is swallowed-up, now shall they be among the Gentiles, as a vessel wherein is no pleasure: for they are gone up to Assyria.

17. When people, settling on their lees, grow secure, and carnally confident, as afraid of nothing, as if they were without the reach of God's hand, and all hazard; then it is to be feared, that God shall make it appear, that He is stronger, than they: For this likewise was the sin of Iudah Jer. 21: 13, 14. Behold I am against thee, O Inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plaine, saith the Lord, which say, who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations? But I will punish you according to the fruit

fruit of your doings ——— and I will kindle a fire, in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about. This was also charged on Israel by Amos Chap. 6: 13. Ye which rejoyce in a thing of nought, which say, have we not taken to ourselves horns by our own strength? For which cause see what followeth. Vers 14. But behold I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord the God of Hosts, and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath, unto the River of the Wilderneck. The like we finde Amos, 9: 10. All the sinners of my People shall die by the Sword, which say, the evil shall not overtake, nor prevent us. See Ezek. 9: 9, 10.

18. When a People have followed these courses of sin, notwithstanding of many reiterated warnings and admonitions, given by the Lords Servants; then it is to be feared, that God shall wait upon them with warnings no longer, but shall once for all send a devouring stroke, that they shall not with all their cries get prevented, nor taken off them; according to that Prov. 29: 1. He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddainly be destroyed, and that without remedie. And that Prov. 1: 24. to 31. Because I have called, -and ye refused
&c.

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&c. I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlle winde ——— Then shall ye call upon me, but I will not answere &c. Thus was it with this People of Judah, Jer. 7: 13. And now because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spoke unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called you, but ye answered not. Then it followeth Vers 14, 15. Therefore will I do unto this House ——— as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out of my sight, all your Brethren, The whole Seed of Ephraim: And then He addeth Vers 16. Therefore pray not thou for this People. The same sin is againe charged upon them Vers 25, 26, 27, 28. And then it followeth Vers 29. Cut off thine Hair, ô Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation; for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. So Jer. 25. vers 3. the Prophet tels them in the fourth Yeer of Jebojakim, that he had spoken unto them 23. Year, viz. from the 13. Year of Josiah; but in all vaine: and Vers 4. that the Lord had sent unto them all his servants the Prophets; but all was in vaine Vers 7. Therefore sad judgments
are

are threatened *Vers 8, 9, 10, 11.* even utter desolation, and slavery under the King of Babylon full 70 Years *Vers 12.* See also *Ch. 29: 17, 18, 19.* and *35: 17.* This was Israels sin also *Hos. 5: 2,* and *6: 5, 6, 7.* and *9: 17.* My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him: And they shall be wanderers among the Nations.

19. When People not only will not take warning; but also tush at warnings; then may they fear, that God shall be avenged upon them; for thus was it with this People of Judah, *Jer 5: 11, 12, 13.* For the House of Israel and the House of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me ——— They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not He, neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see sword, nor famine: And the Prophets shall become winde, and the word is not in them. Therefore is destruction by the Caldeans threatned, in the following *Verses 14, 15, 16, 17.* See also *Jer. 6: 10, 11, 12.* So *Jer. 18: v. 12, 13.* When the Lord threatned sad dayes to come upon them, all the use they made of it, was They said, there is no hop; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart We know what that wicked King did with the roll.

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roll of threatenings *Ierem. 36.* but see what followed thereupon *Vers 30, 31.* and another roll is written with additions *Vers 32.*

20. When People turn so impudent in their wayes, and so fixed in their sinful courses, that there is no moving of them by all the warnings that can be used; nay, they become enraged at, and persecute such as do admonish them, or exhort them to amend; then the case seemeth to be desperat, and their destruction must come: for thus was it with *Judah 2 Chron. 36: 15, 16: They mocked the Messengers of God, and misused His Prophets, until the Lord arose against his People, till there was no remedy.* And what sufferings *Jeremiah* met with at their hands, for his faithfulness, his book telleth us *Chapters 11, and 26, and 38.* So was it with *Israel Amos 5: 10. They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, & they abhorre him, that speaketh uprightly.* See also *Amos 7: 10. to the end.* Upon which followed *Chapter 8: v. 2. the end is come upon my People Israel, I will not againe passe by them any more.*

How much more may a People, or a generation, among whom not one, or two, or a few onely of those sins are to be found;
but

but all of them , fear , that such a stroke be coming , that no prayer or humane intercession shall avert ? The Lord tels us by *Ezekiel Ch. 14.* that when He breaketh the staff of bread , and sendeth famine , on a land , because of their trespassing grievously , though these three Men *Noah , Daniel* and *Job* were in it , they should deliver but their own souls *Vers 13, 14.* And againe if He spoile the land by noisome beasts , though these three Men were in it , they should deliver neither Sons , nor Daughters &c. *Vers 15, 16.* So when He bringeth a Sword upon the Land *v. 17, 18.* or a Pestilence *v. 19, 20.* And then addeth *v. 21.* *How much more , when I send my foure sore judgments upon Ierusalem , the Sword and Famine , and the noisome Beasts , and the Pestilence , to cutt off from it man and beast ?* that is , how much more shall I go on and devoure ? And how much less shall they think to escape upon the Petitions of *Noah , Daniel* and *Job* , or upon the account of their relations to them. So , if upon one , or two or a few of the forementioned sins , we finde , that God will bring upon a land inevitable judgments , and will not be stopped. in the execution , by the intercessions of *Moses* and *Samuel* ; how much more ,
may

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may we suppose certainly and unavoidably shall judgment overtake a generation, that is guilty of all those twenty grievous iniquities?

From this matter all of us may learne these lessons.

1. To fear and tremble before this God; seing He is so just and severe a judge and Governour, and seing it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

2. To beware of abusing His Patience: for howbeit it may endure for sometime; yet it will expire at length, as to its effects; and abused longanimity will end in unavoidable ruine, and in inevitable strokes of Iustice.

3. All, whether Lands or particular Persons, who know themselves guilty of the evils mentioned, as causes procuring such inevitable rodes, should hast to break off these courses, that will, no doubt, hasten-on irremediable destruction: It were best to get out of the way of the wrath of God in time.

If it be enquired, what the People of God are called to do, in such a day, when the place they live-in, is guilty of and continueing in these grievous sins, and they

they can look for nothing but wrath to be poured-out; so that no Prayer, Fasting, or Supplication shall hold it off? For *Answer*, Let such minde those duties following,

.1 Let them beware to seek great things for themselves, *Ier. 45.* The Lord said to *Baruch* by the Prophet *Ieremie vers 4, 5.* *Behold, that which I have built, will I break down; and that, which I have planted, will I pluck up, even this whole land: and seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not; for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord.* Whence we see, that it becometh not the People of God, to be too much minding themselves, and their own things, in such a day; but they ought to be very well satisfied, if the Lord give them their life for a prey: as He promised to *Baruch*.

2. They should stoup, and adore this God, who is just and righteous in all His wayes; they should be silent before Him, and put their mouth in the dust: no quarrelsome thoughts should have place or room, in their hearts. *Hold thy Peace saith Zephaniah Ch. 1: 7.) at the presence of the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is at hand: For the Lord hath prepared a Sacrifice, He hath bid his*
guests

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guests &c. When the Lord is about to make a Sacrifice in a land, and to give the carcases of men to the fowls of the Heavens, and the beasts of the field; all flesh should be silent, and His People especially should quiet themselves, and hold their peace before Him, without murmuring, or venting any discontentment, at the matter.

3. They should observe the glory of the Lord, shining forth, in that remarkable Act of Holy Justice; see His Majestie, Awfulness, Terrour, and just Severity, to the engaging of their hearts more unto Him, and to a glorying in Him. The black and dreadful day, that was to come upon Judah, was mentioned, and several things held forth, to make it have a deeper impression *Jer. 9: and v. 22.* it was said, that even the carcases of men shall fall, as dung upon the open field: And then it is added *v. 23.* *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom &c.* and *Vers 24.* But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. To tell us, that in such a day especially, the Lords People should be ta-

V

king

king a right view of God, that they may understand and know Him to be Jehovah & one that exerciseth judgment and righteousness in the earth; and withall one, that even then, exerciseth loving kindness to His own; and a God that delighteth in these exercises; and that they should glory in Him, even in such a day, and delight in that wherein He delighteth.

4. They would do well to refuge themselves in time, in their chambers, and shut their doors about them, and hide themselves for a Little moment, until the indignation be over past: As it is *Esai. 26: 20.* This is the Counsel of the Lord unto His people, in a time, when *the Lord cometh out of His place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth, for their iniquity. v. 21.*

5. They should rest satisfied, though their prayers, in behalfe of the land, have not that success and fruite, that they could have wished; & that upon these grounds and considerations.

(1.) Out of that Dispensation, howbeit both black and terrible; yet God will get glory, both of his *Truth* and *Veracity*, in his threatnings, at which the wicked tushed, & would give no credite to them; which

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which carriage could not but Afflict His people; it could not but grieve them to see those wicked ones carry so atheistical-ly, as contemning all the Denunciations of wrath; but now when the day of execution is come, the Lord is seen to be a God of truth, and His people see then, whose word standeth, whether God's Word, or the word of those wicked sinners *Ier. 44: 28.* And of His justice in pursuing evil doers, who said, by their doings, that He had forsaken the earth, or that He was not a God, that judgeth in the earth. So also of His Holiness, and Purity: For then it's made manifest, that He is not, as they imagined, altogether such an one, as themselves; but that He hateth all the Workers of iniquity.

(2.) God will have a care of them, even then, and be a little sanctuary unto them *Ezek. 11: v. 16.* and cause all things work together for good to them *Rom. 8: v. 28.* He will set a mark upon such, as sigh and cry for all the abominations, that are done, that the men with the slaughter weapon may not come nigh unto them *Ezek. 9.*

(3.) He will return their prayers
V 2 unto

into their own bosome againe ; so that they shall not fall to the ground *Psalms 35. vers 15.*

(4.) He will accept their prayer and intercession, as good service, off their Hand eventhough He think not good to grant the Particular , that they ask : And if they be accepted of Him , in that piece of service , it may suffice and satisfie.

6. They would do well to be sighing and crying for all the abominations , that are committed in the land ; to be keeping themselves free of that guilt , mourning over the same , protesting against it , abhorring the same ; that they may be preserved and protected in the day of God's contending , according to what we read *Ezek. 9: 4, 6.*

7. In the midst of all these desolations, and the effects of the Lords indignation, burning against a sinful generation , they are called to act faith, on God, as the true and faithful God , keeping mercy and covenant for ever , and to waite upon him, in faith , hoping and expecting with confidence , that He will carry on His work, and make His Kingdom come , and make all this contribute unto that end. We see what

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what desolation *Zephaniah* is threatning against *Ierusalem*, and the rest of the Cities of *Iudah* for their great sins *Chap. 3. 1, to 7.* And thereafter *Vers 8.* he inferreth and presseth on them, that would minde the duty of the day, a waiting in Faith and Hop upon the Lord, saying, *Therefore waite ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day, that I rise up to the prey, &c.* And then followeth *Vers. 9, 10.* *For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent, from beyond the Rivers of Eshiochia, my suppliants, the Daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.* They should wait in faith for the accomplishment of all the great and precious promises made to the Church, notwithstanding of all these sad interveening Dispensations. This was the resolution of the Prophet *Esai Chap. 8. 17.* in an evil day, when many should stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared and taken *Vers 15.* *And I will (said he) wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the House of Jacob, and I will look for him.*

But it will be said, what shall the righteous do, in the day, when God is so angry at the whole Land, that He will cut off the righteous with the wicked, and to

this end shall draw His Sword forth out of His Sheath against all Flesh, from the South to the North, as it is Ezek. 21: 3, 4, 5? For *Answer*, I grant such a dispensation may be expected, when all Flesh have corrupted their wayes, and even the righteous, who have not gone the length of others, in Defection and Apostasie, yet have not been valiant for the Lord, and for His oppressed truth, nor so faithful and zealous for the Lord of Hosts, in their Generation, as became them: It is then to be feared, that even many of them shall be swept away with the common calamity, as they have been in part tainted with the common sin, procuring it. And in that case, it is their part to minde these duties following.

1. To be preparing to meet the Lord, with ropes about their necks, acknowledging their sin, giving glory unto the Lord, as just and righteous, in proceeding thus against them with the rest: They should prepare to meet their God, thus coming in His holy displeasure, to glorifie His justice, as the Prophet adviseth Israel to do *Amos 4: 12.*

2. They should be busie to get their peace made with God in time, through
Jesus

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Jesus Christ, that when God shall get glory on their carcases, in the sight of others, they may get their souls for a prey: They should be mourning as doves in the valleys, every one for his iniquity, that their sin may be blotted out, and their souls washen in the blood of Iesus.

3. They should be amending, through the help of the Lord, what hath been amisse, and seeking to Him, and seeking righteousness, & meekness, upon a may be of being hid, in the day of the Lords anger, this is the exhortation of *Zephaniah Chap. 2: 3.* Even to the Godly, *Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness, it may be ye shall be hid, in the day of the Lords anger.*

4. If they should not be hid, but the judgment should overtake them, as well as others, then let them sweetly submit, and lye under the rod, and humble themselves under the mighty Hand of God, *Jam. 4: 10. 1 Pet. 5: 6.* and say, with good old *Eli*, when sad things were denounced against his house; and it was told him, that *God would judge his house forever*, and that the *Lord had sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity thereof should not be purged with*

Sacrifice, nor offering for ever. It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good, 1 Sam. 3. 12, 13, 14, 18. He saw it was Jehovah, who could do no wrong; and therefore he was quiet, and acquiesced to all, that He would do, how sad so ever it was: He saw Him the righteous Governour and Iudge, and said, His holy Will be done.

5. They should accept of this punishment of their iniquity *Levit. 26: ver. 41.* giving Glory to Gods Iustice, and have a complacency (for so the word will import) in that stroke, as being a stroke of Iustice, and a stroke, whereby God will be glorified in His Iustice, Righteousness and holy Severity: Thus should they kisse the rod, and contentedly welcome the Sword of Justice, and kisse its point, when piercing their heart, because of their sins.

6. Thus should they say with good *Hezekiah*, when sad things were denounced against his Family, *Eesai 39: vers 6, 7. Good is the Word of the Lord. Vers 8. It is Jehovah's Word, I have nothing to say against it; holy and righteous is He, and his Judgments are righteous*

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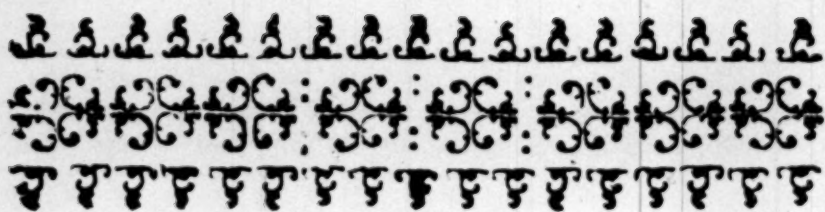
teous , His Threatnings are good : And
thus should they with the Church ,
*Micah 7: vers 9. Bear the Indignation of
the Lord , because they have sinned against
Him.*

A M E N.



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